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THE SCEPTICAL APPROACH TO RELIGION

THE SCEPTICAL APPROACH TO RELIGION

BY

PAUL ELMER MORE



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PREFACE

THESE essays were written to be delivered as lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston and at the University of Cincinnati, and except for the restoration of a few passages omitted on those occasions they are printed without change. A good many of the ideas here brought together systematically and, to the best of my ability, simplified will be found scattered through the volumes of *The Greek Tradition*. In particular the book may be read as a sequel to the essay on Scepticism in *Hellenistic Philosophies*, and to the last two chapters on The Logos in *Christ the Word*. To Mr. E. D. Myers I wish to express my gratitude for helpful criticism of the work in manuscript.

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1

RATIONALISM AND FAITH

IT SHOULD be made perfectly clear at the outset that, in dealing with religion from the sceptical point of view, I am not assuming the impossibility or invalidity of other methods of approach. I am deliberately taking the attitude of those who, as a result either of their own thinking or of unreflective submission to the thought of the age, find intellectual difficulties in the way of accepting the traditional dogmas of faith. Such men ordinarily are regarded, and indeed regard themselves, as sceptics. The question I would raise is whether their doubts do not in most cases spring rather from unexamined assumptions than from a true spirit of inquiry, and whether a thoroughgoing use of reason would not lead to a position more hospitable to the dogmas of religion than to the equally dogmatic tenets of rationalism so-called.

By the sceptical point of view, then, I mean something quite definite. Very briefly, scepticism comes down to this, that it draws a sharp distinction, and persistently maintains a sharp distinction, between knowledge and theory. Knowledge is limited to what we have, not by inference from something else, but directly and without the intervention of inferential reason; in the ancient terminology of the sect, know-

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ledge is what we possess in the form of immediate affections. To take a familiar illustration: I have certain sensations, when looking at or feeling an object, which I express by calling the object red and hard and round. And these sensations I know that I have, whatever you or another may have. Again I have certain feelings of pleasure and pain, hope and fear, elation and depression, self-approval and disapproval, and all the rest. And these, too, no matter how we try to explain them, are simply there, immediate affections of the mind, indisputable facts. Thus much I know, and I know further that these sensations and feelings come to me in certain patterns and sequences, so that I can classify them and order my doings accordingly. The complete sceptic is perfectly justified in addicting himself to scientific pursuits, if by science we mean no more than experimentation among, and classification of, phenomena; and he is equally justified in adapting his life to a chosen scheme of ethics. But the sceptic stops there, and stops sharply. Any attempt to go behind the immediate data of experience, any theory which reason may fabricate of the nature of the objects causing those sensations in his mind, or of himself as the recipient feeling subject; still more, any inference as to the ultimate nature of the world of which all phenomena and he himself are constituent parts, may be true or may be false, but whether true or false he, as sceptic, will not presume to say. Such is the sceptical position which I accept, the self-denying ordinance at which, as it seems to me, the rigorous use of reason must arrive; and I am seeking for an approach to religion from this point of view.

And first of all a word about the method which was advocated by Baron von Hügel, and which, under the cover of his great name, has attracted a good deal of attention in these days. At bottom the Baron's argument amounts to something like this. The child has from birth a vague confused perception of an outer physical environment, and from this is led by the slow lessons of contact to differentiate the various objects that flit before him and to acquire a practical sense of the ordered world in which he lives. But in addition to the faculty of physical perception man is born with an inner and immediate sense of a spiritual object which by attention may gradually develop into knowledge of what he will call God. Belief in God is thus attained not so much by inference or rational demonstration as by clarifying and strengthening an immediate affection just as is our belief in an outer world of phenomena.

Let me say that I personally am not prepared to deny the validity of this approach to theism and religion; but from the critical point of view it is open to serious objection. The difficulty is obvious. However imperative the immediate intuition of God may be for those who trust in it, there is no means by which its acceptance can be forced upon those—and they today at least would be the majority—who assert that they are unaware of any such experience. The doubters of course may be wrong. It may be true that all men are born with an immediate sense of the being of God, and that, if the vision is lost, it is because it has been choked by cares of the world or prevented from growing by other interests, but the fact remains that in many minds such an immediate sense of the being of God has been lost or remains so vague as of itself

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to have little force of persuasion. If in our apology for religion we are to meet the intellectual unbeliever on his own grounds, we must fall back for our starting point upon some element of consciousness which is universal to all men and cannot be honestly disputed.

And that element can be found, if anywhere, in the sense of self-approval or disapproval which makes itself felt in the mind as a man acts in one way or another. I begin with myself. I simply know by an intuitive affection, however that intuition may come to me, that some acts are for myself right and others wrong. With that intuition I have a concomitant feeling of self-approval when I do what seems to me right, and of disapproval when I do what seems to me wrong. I am thus somehow holding myself responsible for my acts, which is the same thing as saying that to myself I appear to be free to choose between what I regard as right and what I regard as wrong. Further, the feeling of disapproval, when it arises, can be described as repentance or remorse. That is to say, with self-dissatisfaction there is bound up a regret, and regret is inseparable from some purpose to act differently in the future. There is thus inherent in my very nature as man a purpose, a stirring of the will, however faint and intermittent, to shape my life and character after a pattern which is associated with a *telos*, or "end," of self-approval. All of which may be summed up in the statement that the moral sense, or conscience, is an integral part of my constitution as a human being, and that, in so far as it embraces not only a present feeling but an intention for the future, it is teleological.

Now it is to be noted that this moral sense comes to me not at all by inference or reasoning. In the

language of Aristotle, who first analysed the action of conscience, it is an *aisthēsis*, a direct perception, or, in the sceptic's terminology, an immediate affection; and as the perception of an inner state it may be called intuition, an ultimate fact of our conscious experience. As such, and so far, it is a matter of incontrovertible knowledge. And, secondly, this intuition in the *forum conscientiae* appears to be, so far as we can learn, not peculiar to one's self but universal. You may find a man who theoretically denies the distinction of right and wrong as having any objective authority; but if you press him you will discover that always there is a point in conduct at which he will admit feeling the distinction for himself, and will resent the suggestion of acting in a certain way as base and distasteful. A man's moral sense may be very low and shifty, but no man, whether in a state of savagery or of advanced civilization, escapes remorse if he commits an act flagrantly at variance with his code of right and wrong; and no man, though his resolution may be extremely feeble, lacks at least a *velleity*, or slightest stirring of the will, to act in the future so as to avoid remorse. I do not believe you will discover anywhere, or at any time, a human being who does not feel ill at ease if he is conscious of having betrayed a friend, and who does not, under the sting of shame, form some sort of resolve for the future. In other words, so far as we can judge from what men say of themselves, the teleology of conscience is universal.

So much I know of myself; so much the most complete sceptic will admit that he knows of himself. But as knowledge it stops just there; and this is a condition of our argument we must not forget. Because at any moment I have a feeling of self-approval or

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disapproval, it does not follow that this judgement must correspond with what I should feel with larger experience of life or with clearer scrutiny of myself. In fact such feelings, if allowed to influence us unchecked and unexamined, may prove in the test to be very fallible guides to action. Nevertheless they are there, unfailingly with us; and they do involve the constant sense of responsibility and freedom and purpose. Furthermore, any attempt to get behind the bare working of conscience as a law of man's inner being, with whatever may be implied by the word law, any attempt to determine *how* or *why* it is there, or to prove from it the existence of a lawgiver who governs the world in which man's life is staged,— any such endeavour carries us forthwith out of the range of knowledge into the probabilities of inference and theory.

Not only is this so, but we have to take account of that other kind of *aisthēsis*, called more properly observation than intuition, since it involves rather the looking out at things set over against us than the looking in at ourselves. And the troublesome business for our thinking is that through observation we seem to be in contact with a set of facts not only different from, but contrary to, the facts of intuition. All that I immediately *observe* of the natural world and of man as a part of nature appears as mechanically shifting patterns or as a series of mechanical actions and reactions. There are no *visible* signs of voluntary choice controlling what we see happening about us, no direct indications to the eye of purpose.¹

¹ I am aware that my distinctions and terminology are too simple to satisfy the professional epistemologist, but I am not trying to write a treatise of epistemology—*absit*. The distinction

How then am I to deal with these contrary data of intuition and observation? Both come to me in the form of immediate perception: both would appear to have the character of knowledge; both evade the destructive analysis of a true scepticism; yet they seem to be mutually destructive one of the other. To intuition I and all men are conscious of freedom and responsibility and purpose; to observation I and all men, like the mechanisms amidst which we move, appear to be not free and not responsible and to have no purpose. Is the human world, then, at once both teleological and non-teleological?

Now there are, you will find, three different ways in which the mind may react when brought to bay by this paradox, and as a result men fall into three main groups, more or less sharply divided as they are more or less acutely aware of the urgency of the problem. To the first group would belong those who, simply admitting the facts of experience, reject the claims of reason to evade the antithesis between observation and intuition. By this I do not mean the state of one

between "observation" and "intuition" means no more than this, that we do recognize two domains of experience, viz. our knowledge of external phenomena and the consciousness of ourselves, our needs, responsibilities, and so on. And for this dichotomy of experience I can think of no better terms than observation and intuition, though these words, especially the latter, are not without ambiguity, owing to their various uses. So of the other distinction. It may be that there is no such thing as pure perception, *aisthesis*. Some process of mind may be involved in the judgement that this particular group of sensations is a stone, or that the feelings of responsibility and freedom and purpose are included in the sense of self-approval or disapproval. But whatever these mental processes may be, they are radically distinct from the inferential procedure that arrives at a theory of the ultimate nature of things as corresponding with either or both of the two domains of observation and intuition.

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whose immediate affections, however received, are so dull and whose brain is so sluggish that the conflict never occurs to him or occurs so feebly as to awaken no disquiet. We may leave such an one out of our consideration, as Dante turned from the souls of the unfortunate who had never really lived. I am thinking rather of those who are very much alive, to whom the contrast between observation and intuition comes so keenly and seems so final, that they deliberately refuse to let their minds play upon the paradox at all and, as they say, hold their judgement in suspense. These are the true sceptics whom I place in the first group. But I would have you notice that those who resolutely stop here and refuse to draw any inference from the facts of experience, are extremely rare. Whatever he may profess, the thinking man is drawn almost irresistibly by the needs of life and the tyranny of temperament to yield to the temptation of theorizing about what he sees and feels. And particularly I would have you notice that this is true of those who believe themselves to be sceptics and call themselves agnostics. Watch their acts and examine their words, and you will find that, like Huxley who invented the name, they are so interested in the visible phenomena of the world as in their theories to ignore or, when pressed by argument, to deny any genuine validity to the voice of conscience. Quite generally they pass from the first to the second of our three groups of thinkers, and may be classified with *those who, accepting the data of observation as true, by explicit or covert inference reject the contrary data of intuition as illusory.*

Ordinarily today such men, these dogmatists who often masquerade as agnostics, reach their point of

view from a direct interest in physical science or through the more obscure influence of others so interested. And it is easy to see how this happens. By observation we are immediately aware of certain motions and activities among the phenomena all about us. On the one hand we perceive inanimate objects behaving after the manner of billiard balls played one upon the other, or of a machine in operation. There appears to be what might be called a static system of interlocked motions; the individual objects are changing their position, but the system remains unchanged; there are constantly varying patterns, but no real growth and nothing essentially new. At the same time we observe a whole group of animate objects in the process of growth: the acorn developing into an oak and the child developing into a man. And then, carried along by an urgent impulse to simplify, we merge these two fields of observation together. From what we observe of the animate half of nature we think of the whole world as undergoing a sort of growth or development, while at the same time, from what we observe of the inanimate half of nature, we conceive this growth as a process of purely mechanical evolution. There is, even the scientist must admit, something of inference, or as he would say hypothesis, in this interfusion of the two fields of observation, but it is an inference that has forced itself upon the minds of many thinking men from the days of Heracleitus to the present. And now, with the advent of palaeontology into the realm of science, we can say that the rôle of inference has become less and less dominant, and that we are enabled to observe, if not the actual process of evolution, at least the clear signs left over from that process. We have some right to say that the

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bare fact of evolution has been removed from the sphere of inferential philosophy to the sphere of observational science. And always the theory of evolution, so long as it remains scientific, is observational to this extent, that it entirely eschews any implication with what comes to us by intuition. As the scientist studies the growing acorn, as he traces the palaeontological signs of cosmic development, he may indeed observe a system of mutual adjustments which impart to nature the appearance of design or plan, but behind this system he perceives no visible indications of a conscious purpose at work ; and if he speaks of natural law, he is only giving a name to some indefinable power of chance or fatality threading the sequence of observed phenomena. Science, as Spinoza argued convincingly, is resolutely non-teleological, and must be non-teleological.

Inference, of a more dubious sort, creeps in when the scientist, not content with deliberately and legitimately leaving intuition out of his working theory of the world, presumes to deny the validity of intuition as an independent fact in its own sphere. And the temptation to do this is readily understandable. From observing other men I turn to myself, and immediately I am aware that observation gives the same result here as elsewhere : I see, looking at myself from the outside, so to speak, how inheritance and environment are at work in shaping my own destiny exactly as they are with other men. The paradox of observing myself as part of a mechanical process of evolution, and at the same moment intuiting myself as a free and responsible agent, the difficulty of admitting that I am at once separate from the world as a purposive being and part of a world evolving under some un-

conscious law of necessity becomes more distressing the more I reflect, until to escape the dilemma I reason away the disturbing factor of conscious teleology as a product of illusion. Hence the second group of those whom I rank as open or covert dogmatists of observation.

In direct contrast with these would be the third group, viz. *those who, accepting the content of intuition as valid, reject, if not the data of observation, at least the dogmatic inferences therefrom, as illusory*. It will be seen that the opposition here displayed can be traced back to a primary divergence of interest or emphasis. In both cases the mind has been caught by the dilemma of outer determination and inner freedom, and its resolution of this contradiction follows one or the other of two lines as it responds more vigorously to the solicitations of what is outwardly observed or of what is inwardly felt; and as its interest and attention are thus centred upon one or the other order of experience, so that order gains in emphasis, while the other loses in emphasis until it can be disregarded as an illusion. The faculty of our mind by which the isolated data of observation are combined into a theory of mechanically operated changes is reason, and the extension of this inference so as to cover, or exclude, the field of intuition is properly called rationalism. The contrary force, which fixes our attention upon the content of intuition as more significant and real than the data of observation, is in its origin so obscure as scarcely to have a name. But to its manifestation as a more or less conscious opposition to the inference of rationalism we give the name of faith, and the life directed and controlled by faith we call religion. Faith may then be defined as

the faculty that urges us on to carry over the immediate sense of personal freedom and responsibility and purpose into our interpretation of the world at large, in defiance, if need be, of that more self-assertive display of reason which we call rationalism. To faith the whole world thus becomes teleological just as the individual is conscious of being teleological; and religion is an attempt to live in harmony with a world so conceived.

For the rest my object in this lecture is to consider briefly some of the inevitable corollaries of faith as so defined, and to examine its warrant for acceptance.

First of all we must keep clearly before us the fact that the faith of religion, as we are considering it, is not knowledge but inference, and we should make no attempt to escape the implications of such an admission. But if faith stands thus on the same basis with rationalism, as one alternative of two possible attitudes towards the paradox of experience, yet its procedure is not quite the same as that of the other alternative. In a sense the religious man's inference from intuition rejects the result of observation as an illusion, just as the rationalist's inference from observation rejects the result of intuition as an illusion. But the parallel is not exact. The inference of rationalism is by its nature all-embracing and fanatically dogmatic; it simply sweeps away the possibility of freedom and responsibility anywhere and everywhere; it tells me categorically that my intuition is a pure illusion having no correspondence with the facts of existence, and that if I think of myself as free and responsible I am merely a victim of self-deception. Theoretically, if I accept the contention of rationalism, I may seem to have reached a logical solution of the dilemma of ex-

perience, and I may thus bring a certain ease to my mind ; but the simple truth must not be shuffled out of sight that I have accomplished this by means of pure inference, and that the consciousness of myself as a responsible being capable of purpose remains uneliminated and unaltered. I may by inference remove the immediate affection of freedom from my theory of life ; I shall continue to live nevertheless precisely as if I had no such theory.

In contrast with this procedure the inference of faith is more modest and consistent ; it is thus, in the proper use of the word, more reasonable than rationalism, as it is far less subject to the corrosive acid of scepticism. It does not, at least it need not, so much reject as transcend the immediate data of observation. It may, without betraying its own demands, admit that the acorn, so far as we can see, develops into an oak by a law which leaves to the acorn itself no freedom of action and no responsibility for its growth ; it may with perfect consistency admit, indeed in loyalty to itself is rather bound to believe, that the cosmic evolution has left no visible material records of a conscious purposive mind at work in the cosmos itself. In other words, faith normally does not transfer our consciousness of freedom and responsibility and purpose to, or into, the observed phenomena of the objective universe, but rather infers the existence of a free and responsible agent, whose purpose is operative in the world while He Himself is transcendent to the world. The content of faith is thus theistic rather than pantheistic or deistic. To sum up the argument in more technical language ; the inference from observation is in the direction of a materialistic or pseudo-spiritual monism, whereas the proper inference

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from intuition leads to a dualism of spirit and matter. This is the true meaning of cosmic teleology as different from immanent law, and it was against precisely this dualistic conception of teleology that the rationalizing philosophers of the seventeenth century thundered in the index.²

To the proposition that faith is intrinsically theistic every student of religion will assent, and he will admit with equal readiness certain corollaries, as they may be called, of theism.³ The belief in such a God as we conceive by faith must react upon the immediate intuition of ourselves from which faith draws its content. Our sense of freedom is not quite the same when we think of ourselves as in a world under the governance of a divine Agent, but is directed into an effort to conform our will to the will of God. Our sense of responsibility takes on a more definite aspect of obligation to a supreme Ruler and Judge. The morality of self-satisfaction is thus transformed into the morality of duty. And with the recognition of duty there enters a new hope. The sense of purpose is caught up into, and justified by, a vaster teleology. The God of purpose, we trust, will not leave our deepest desires frustrate. In particular the instinctive

² In drawing this contrast between the uses of observation and of intuition I have omitted the emotional reaction of the poet, or of the poetic faculty within all of us, which brings a sense of something human and divine interfused through nature. This, I take it, is not a result of pure observation but is definable as the pathetic fallacy (though the word fallacy rather begs the question). It is a kind of halfway house between the scientific outlook and the fully teleological inference of faith. I have in mind to deal with this subject in an essay on Wordsworth.

³ I say nothing here of Buddhism which, in its early form, was neither theistic nor, in the full sense of the word, teleological. This subject I have dealt with elsewhere, in *The Catholic Faith*.

belief in immortality, whether it comes to the primitive man by inference from the immediate consciousness of life or as a defensive reaction against the fear of death, acquires a new assurance from faith in an eternal and benevolent Lord of life.

To these corollaries of belief, which affect the human side, so to speak, of religion, the theist adheres spontaneously. But there are other implications of theism, affecting rather the supernatural factor of religion, to which theologians have not always been favourably inclined. Faith according to our definition starts from, and receives at least its initial content from, man's immediate intuition of freedom and responsibility and purpose. Now the consciousness of purpose can mean only this, that I have in my mind an ideal of righteousness, a conception of something better than my present state, a pattern of life more or less clearly outlined, which, in my moods of exaltation, perhaps oftener in my moments of repentance I propose to attain by voluntary effort. Such a purpose may exhaust itself in transient regret or futile dreaming, but in one degree or another it comes to all men, even the most abandoned. Further the accompanying sense of responsibility, which is an inherent factor of self-applause or self-condemnation, implies that this ideal is not the arbitrary creation of my own fancy, but in some way possesses authority which I neglect at peril of my happiness. And still further, the accompanying sense of freedom has a double significance. It implies on the one hand that I am conscious of a power within myself to move on towards the fulfilment of my purpose. And it implies on the other hand, and simultaneously, the presence of obstacles on my path, of difficulties to be overcome;

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otherwise purpose would not be what it is, the proposal to achieve an end, but would be a self-accomplished desire; there would be no time-process, but an immediate fact.

Now if cosmic teleology is an inference from the teleological knowledge of myself, if faith is a transference of this triple form of consciousness to a Being who transcends the world, then we are bound by our faith to a corresponding conception of the nature and operation of such a Being. As a matter of fact, if we deal with the subject honestly, we shall see that the whole history of religion from the superstition of the most ignorant savage to the creed of the most enlightened man of today does actually follow this law of correspondence. We shall discover the same inference of purpose and freedom and responsibility in the mysterious object of primitive worship as in the God of the most advanced theism. For what is the daemonic presence, too vague perhaps even to possess a name, which excites at once the awe and the devotion of the earliest known man, and which he thinks he can in some degree control by means of magical formulae and rites? It is a something instinctively rather than consciously conjectured behind the world of his observation which is purposing to bring good or evil to the individual man or his people; something free and transcendent in so far as it is separated in his thought from the little mechanical world of his restricted observation; yet at the same time hampered somehow by that which it transcends and through which it works; something responsive in the sense that it may respond to the worshipper's prayers and threats, but responsible also to the worshipper's moral code in a manner which justifies him in showing on

occasion indignation against the invisible power for what he regards as wrong-doing as well as gratitude for right-doing. The object of primitive faith is thus utterly anthropomorphic; but it scarcely can be called personal, just as primitive man has the vaguest notion of his own personality. And this is the point where progress enters. One may say that the change from superstition to religion and the gradual development of religion to the most refined theism can be measured by an ever clearer understanding of personality as involved in the intuition of purpose and freedom and responsibility, by an ever clearer conception of faith as a conscious inference of such a personality behind the mechanism of observed phenomena.

Growth in religion is thus in the direction of a deeper and broader anthropomorphism; *but not away from anthropomorphism*. And this is a corollary of faith that must not be forgotten. So long as God remains a purposeful Being—and to faith He can be only that—He must be imagined as working out a design, just as man is conscious of doing, through some sort of obstacle or hindrance and by the lingering processes of time. There can in fact be no conception of purpose without such limitation, though with deepening self-consciousness the inference of limitation may change in character. Similarly He must be held, like man, responsible to the moral law, though again the nature of the moral law will purify itself and deepen as human experience grows larger. And so God's freedom will correspond to man's liberty of choice, developed to that self-determination to choose only good which man sees as the far-off goal of his own endeavour. If ever theologians, whether Christian or non-Christian, growing restive under the

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restraints of anthropomorphism, have framed what seemed to them a higher definition of the Supreme Being, if ever they have declared His freedom to be absolute power to do as He would, if they have altered responsibility into absolute authority over good and evil as though moral distinctions were no more than the decrees of His unconditioned will, if they have transmuted purpose into absolute creativeness,—then they have done so, not by pursuing the humble inferences of faith from intuition, but by transferring to God the monistic inferences of absolute causality drawn from observation of the mechanical sequences of nature. That was the way of Calvin, for instance, in reaching his rationalized theology of determinism. Yet it is a notable fact that, whenever religion has not been utterly stifled by misapplied metaphysics, the true inferences of faith will, in the theologian's unguarded moments, break through the whole panoply of absolutism. It was Jonathan Edwards, most intrepid of Calvinists, who, after reducing man's consciousness of free will to an illusion in order to leave the will of God absolute, gave this noble expression to the theism of faith :

We must conceive of Him as influenced in the highest degree by that which, above all others, is properly a moral inducement, viz. the moral good which He sees in such and such things : and therefore He is, in the most proper sense, a moral Agent, the source of all moral ability and agency, the fountain and rule of all virtue and moral good ; though by reason of his being supreme over all, it is not possible He should be under the influence of law or command, promises or threatenings, rewards or punishments, counsels or warnings. The essential qualities of a moral Agent are in God, in the greatest possible perfection ; such as understanding, to perceive the difference between moral good and evil : . . . and also a capacity of choice, and choice guided by

understanding, and a power of acting according to his choice or pleasure, and being capable of doing those things which are in the highest sense praiseworthy.

Such, I hold, are the inevitable corollaries of faith. The Christian may object that the whole content of his religion does not come to him by a spontaneous inference of faith alone but in part has been directly revealed by an act of divine grace. That may well be true; but the question thus raised of grace and revelation has been deliberately eschewed in this essay for treatment elsewhere, and at any rate is secondary to that of faith. Here I am only contending that the theism which, without being at all peculiar to Christianity, yet constitutes its necessary basis, comes by an inference of faith, and cannot demand the allegiance of faith unless it remains true to its origin.

Why, then, if faith is what I have described it to be, do we make such an inference, what warrant have we for its validity, and what compulsion lies upon us for taking religion seriously as a matter of any consequence to our intellectual and practical life?

Now the reply to these queries given by a large number of thinking men, of whom Professor John Dewey may be named as an eminent example, is at once simple and specious. The inference of faith they declare, is merely a "wishes belief," a "defence attitude." We are here in a world which affords no knowledge of any life beyond the span of our mortal years, and no knowledge of a supernatural Being who is governing it in accordance with our individual sense of freedom and responsibility to an end corresponding to our sense of purpose. We crave the existence of such a Being, and so we infer that He does exist. We are dismayed by the thought of our life as confined

to the limits of birth and death, terrified by the great gulf of nothingness which yawns before us at the end of our course, tormented by our loneliness in a world where there is no personality responding to our human need of companionship. And so, losing heart, unwilling to face the hard facts, we create for ourselves a religion as a pure attitude of defence against the truth. We believe simply because we wish to believe, because we are afraid not to believe.

The issue is clear cut. The infidel has thrown down the gauntlet ; for myself I am ready to accept the *défi* and to meet the challenger on his own ground. Whatever others may have said of mystical visions, whatever tales there may be of violent irruptions from the supernatural world, I can only report that for myself I can see no sure warrant for the beginning of religion except in faith, and no warrant for rejecting the infidel's identification of faith with desire. I say for myself ; yet I think that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was with me when he defined faith as "the substance of things hoped for." What is the meaning of these words except that faith is a deliberate act of confidence in our hopes, and what is the meaning of this but an acceptance of the challenge that we believe because we wish to believe? And I submit that the Church today holds the same position. At least I can put no other interpretation upon the words of a learned Jesuit which, though they were intentionally directed against myself, sound to me like a confirmation of what I would maintain. "You may," he says, "*tell yourself, intelligo ut credam* : but . . . the intimate understanding of Catholicity, which is the real understanding of it, comes only after your act of Catholic faith, after your adherence, after

your *credo ut intelligam*." For what is this *credo ut intelligam* but an admission that the initial act of faith is, again, to believe because we wish to believe, hoping that possibly confirmation in experience may come later?

All this, you will observe, is no more than a corollary of the sceptic's statement that knowledge, demonstrable knowledge at least, is limited to our immediate affections, and that faith is therefore not knowledge but undemonstrable inference. Nor has reason any power to demonstrate that the inferred existence of a God is necessarily true. At least I can say that of all the rational attempts to demonstrate the existence of God—and I have read many from Plato's time to those of the present day—not one is logically coercive, not one of them bridges the gap between a demonstration of what would be in the world if anything there corresponded to what we know of ourselves by intuition, and demonstration of the fact that something does actually there exist corresponding to our intuition. Against that final doubt reason is perfectly powerless. It is, to illustrate my point, because of the inadequacy of A. E. Taylor's attempt to solve this problem rationally in his initial chapter on Actuality and Value, while he seems to imply that the validity of religion depends upon such a solution, that we go through the rest of this really noble work on *The Faith of a Moralist* with the unquieted sense of having been trapped by some concealed fallacy.

Again, admit the challenger's assertion that we believe because we wish to believe, because we are afraid not to believe. What then?

Well, first of all I would ask the challenger to play fair. I would say to him: You tell me that my faith

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is a mere refuge from the known facts. Very good. But you cannot make such an accusation and at the same time cloak yourself about in the pretended indifference of the self-styled "agnostic"; having taken this positive attitude, you cannot avoid the issue you have raised by asserting that we know nothing of the truth or falsehood of any proposition whatsoever and must therefore hold our judgement in absolute equilibrium. This is not a matter of idle curiosity, as if one were debating whether he should open his egg at the sharp or the flat end. Faith means belief in God and in the responsibility of my human soul to God, and religion, if it is anything more than a *flatus vocis*, means a life fashioned in accordance with that belief. Indifference to faith, equally with dogmatic denial of faith, is pragmatically a rejection of the demands of religion. You, the challenger, cannot hold me to the consequences of my position, while you slip easily from the infidel's stand of open contradiction to the self-styled agnostic's indifference of suspended judgement. There are not three parties to our dispute, but only two: to the honourable mind it must be either acceptance or non-acceptance of the inference of faith, with loyalty to the consequences of one or the other choice.

And in another matter I would ask the challenger to play fair. Again I would say to him: You cannot belittle my faith as a product of fear and as a defence-attitude, and then laugh at me for fleeing from a bogey of my own fancy. It is you who are fond of asserting that faith springs from a refusal to face facts. Or, if you would creep out of the implication of such an assertion by adding that it is not really facts from which I am fleeing but my own falsely pessimistic

colouring of the facts ; if, that is, you present the truth of life as simply this, that my conscious existence is measured by the quick transit from birth to death, that I am only a sudden and momentary emergence into a world which pursues its ruthless course with grand indifference to what my desires may be, and with nothing at its heart which corresponds to my sense of personal freedom and responsibility, that my life is like a bubble tossed up from a sea of waves clashing endlessly and purposelessly beneath an empty sky, and of tides sweeping restlessly hither and thither in obedience to no directing hand—if this is the fact you would beg me to face, yet would insist that there is nothing to disquiet or discomfort me, nothing to fear, nothing to justify me in running off to some imaginary refuge, then I would retort with the charge that your optimism is less logical than my faith ; I would say that this optimism of yours, granting it to be genuine, either is dependent on the dullness of an atrophied imagination or is itself a kind of stubborn and joyless and very vulnerable defence-attitude. And in this the judgement of mankind is with me, and it is you that stand in arbitrary isolation. Not here and now only, but always and everywhere, when men begin to reflect, their reaction towards a world seen without God and without purpose is dark with despair and bitter with resentment. Plutarch, heritor of all the wisdom of Greece, has filled a long essay with quotations from the poets of his land which come to a head in the pungent line of Euripides :

We name it life, in fact 'tis only travail.

And Shakespeare's Macbeth is more emphatic :

Out, out, brief candle !
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
 And then is heard no more : it is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.

And if you think these words are merely dramatic and do not come from the heart of Shakespeare himself, read his cry for "restful death" in the sixty-sixth sonnet. I do not mean to imply for a moment that the line of Euripides contains the complete tradition of Greece, or that Macbeth's outburst and the sixty-sixth sonnet convey all that Shakespeare had to say about our human lot. But they do emphatically represent the mood of the great masters of literature, ancient and modern, when they reflect upon the actuality of life in a world deprived of what you, my challenger, would brush aside as the illusion of "blind hopes"; they do very courageously express what you yourself must feel when you are sincere with yourself, or certainly would feel if your imagination were not atrophied. *De te fabula.*

And so I take up the challenge. I must either believe or disbelieve that there is within the world, or, rather, beyond the world, that which corresponds to my intuition of freedom and responsibility; I must either regard the universe as teleological, with all which this implies, or I must regard it as without purpose. There is for the honest and serious mind, for the practical rule of life, no middle ground. And faced with the compulsion of choosing between such alternatives I say to you, the champion of what you call facts, that your view is simply incredible. You ask me to believe

that nature has planted in me, and not in me alone but in all men, desires which I must eradicate as pure deceptions, that I am the victim of a cosmic jest, only the more cruel if unintended, that the ultimate fact of existence is a malignant mockery. The genial Autocrat of the Breakfast Table once said that no decent man could logically hold the doctrines of Calvin without going mad. His gibe upon that parody of faith was not without point, but it might be applied with even greater aptitude to the challenger of the very principle of faith. Again I say : *de te fabula.*

I am not retracting the admission that faith, initially at least, is inference and not knowledge, or that a man believes because he wishes to believe ; I am only saying that, all things considered, the so-called disbelief of the infidel is an inference which, if honestly examined, demands an act of almost impossible credulity.

But the issue does not end here. Faith, to become religion, must be something more than lip-assent to a greater probability. Religion requires a decision of the will to live in accordance with faith, an unremitting determination to transmute a probability of belief into a truth of experience. It is thus, as Pascal declared, a *pari*, a wager, a great venture, in which a man stakes his all upon the realization of a hope. And here it must be admitted that infidelity is much easier, less exacting, than faith. The life of infidelity demands no such effort of the will and no such renunciations as does the life of religion ; it is rather by comparison a letting of oneself go, a facile surrender to the streaming impressions that crowd upon us from the outer world and to the tides of sensation that ebb and flow within us. So it is that in moments of depression and

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apparent failure, we hear the voice of doubt, like a whisper in the ear, saying : After all faith at best is only a matter of probability which we are under no obligation to accept ; why then take the harder course ? Against such doubts the best remedy would seem to be Plato's prescription of a handy sentence in the form of an *eρôdê*, or charm, to be repeated over and over again :

Χαλεπὸν τὸ πιστεύειν ἀμήχανον τὸ ἀπιστεῖν.

Difficilius discredere quam credere.

It is hard to believe, harder not to believe.

The alternative to faith, if honestly faced, is an act of impossible credulity.

You may remember the close of Socrates' argument in gaol with the challenger of his faith :

"These, my dear friend Crito, are the words that I seem to hear, as the mystic worshippers seem to hear the piping of flutes ; and the sound of this voice so murmurs in my ears that I can hear no other. I know that anything more which you may say will be vain. Yet speak, if you have anything to say."

"I have nothing to say, Socrates."

"Leave me then, Crito, to fulfil the will of God, and to follow whither he leads."

II

THE SOCRATIC REVOLUTION

ONE day in the year 1778 Dr. Johnson was dining with a group of friends at the house of a certain Mr. Dilly. The conversation had ranged over all manner of topics from the philosophy of cookery, in which the doctor professed himself an adept, to the evidences of the Christian religion, when he suddenly introduced the topic of the American Revolution. Whereupon, as Boswell relates, he exclaimed, “I am willing to love all mankind, *except an American*;” and his inflammable corruption bursting into horrid fire, he breathed out threatenings and slaughter,” in tremendous volleys, “which one might fancy could be heard across the Atlantic.” It was to allay this tempest that Dr. Mayo asked Dr. Johnson whether he had read Edwards of New England, on Grace, and Boswell, anticipating Crabb Robinson’s complaint that the book had done him “an irreparable injury,” added: “It puzzled me so much as to the freedom of the human will by stating, with wonderful acute ingenuity, our being actuated by a series of motives which we cannot resist, that the only relief I had was to forget it.” So was broached the great argument, which ended with Dr. Johnson’s ever memorable dictum: “All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience for it.”

In one brief sentence the old Dictator of Fleet Street—and I can see him shake his head as he uttered it—summed up for practical purposes all that I tried to expand in my former lecture; and I think there is a sounder basis of philosophy in his words than you will find anywhere in Locke or Berkeley or Hume. He meant, as the rest of the conversation shows clearly enough, that by inference from the facts of observation (that is by "theory") we are led to a conception of the whole range of cosmic events, including human conduct, as just happening in a fatal order of sequence, whereas to "experience" (that is to intuition as I use the word) man feels himself to be a free and responsible agent. Otherwise expressed, the moment we begin to reflect on the nature of things we are faced by the paradoxical contradiction of determinism and freedom, out of which reason may try to extricate us as best she can. Practically the ordinary man lives, as it might be said, from hand to mouth, in hours of reflection wavering from one horn of the theoretical dilemma to the other, but more generally not reflecting at all.

But philosophy, whether for man's blessing or undoing, cannot rest in such a compromise. Unless in humility it is willing to abide in the rarest of all states, genuine scepticism, it must reason out some reconciliation of the paradox of experience (experience, that is, not in the Johnsonian, but in the larger sense including both observation and intuition), and the strange fact, the utterly amazing fact, if one stops to consider, is that philosophy by an almost irresistible impulse lays hold of the data of observation, and from that proceeds by a series of inferences, properly called rationalism, to build up a conception of the world in which

no possible place is left for the human sense of freedom and responsibility and purpose. "All theory," as Dr. Johnson said, "is against the freedom of the will." In other words philosophy, when divorced from the faith of religion, has an almost fatal tendency to become non-teleological; and this, I repeat, is a strange, an amazing fact. For, after all, to quote Dr. Johnson again: "You are surer that you can lift up your finger or not as you please than you are of any conclusion from a deduction of reasoning."

I would not be too absolute in my statement. There are, as in the nature of the case would be expected, glimpses of cosmic teleology in various philosophies of the Orient and the Occident. But if you examine them, you will find, I believe, that always, with a single exception, one or another of the three factors of intuition—whether it be freedom or responsibility or purpose—is lacking to the completed system; and without all three of these factors teleology is a name and nothing more. For an independent development of the full circle of intuition into an articulate theory of the world overriding, or supplementing, the inference from observation,—for that, so far as my knowledge goes, we must look to Greece, and, more narrowly, to a particular city of that land, Athens, and in that city to the only two philosophers of note contributed by it to the course of Hellenic thought. Again we have the astonishing fact that Socrates and Plato appear suddenly and inexplicably as a contradiction to the prevalent trend of their age and people. It may be true that their ideas correspond with the ethical basis of tragedy, and are thus intrinsically Athenian; but among the professed philosophers of Greece all those who preceded Socrates are non-teleological in

their outlook, as are all those who followed Plato. They stand in this respect utterly alone, shining like a gleam of light in the vast encompassing darkness, a kind of illusory dawn which, for Greece at least, brought no day.¹

This is not the place to undertake a history of Greek philosophy, but a brief reference to the course of thought before Socrates is called for in order to understand the revolutionary character of the teleological idea. And first a few words on the etymology of the term itself. Manifestly "teleology" derives from *telos*, which is the Greek for "end." But it is perhaps not quite so manifest that *telos*, like its English equivalent "end," has two distinct meanings. It may mean simply "cessation" (*teleutē*) or "limit" (*peras*); in which case it signifies no more than that an action, or a series of events, comes to an end by exhausting itself and ceasing to be. Physics of recent years, in the mouths of Eddington and Jeans and other popularizers, has had a good deal to say about a thermodynamical law of entropy or some other mathematical demon that is, or is not, dragging the cosmic energies to a stalemate, or precipitating things to catastrophe in "the war of elements, the wrecks of matter, and the crush of worlds." But evidently, whatever may be the truth or untruth of these theories, such a *telos* has nothing to do with what we mean by teleology, nor indeed with any other philosophy. For this we must look to the second meaning of *telos*, by which it signifies "end" not as mere cessation or limit but as completion, consummation, perfection. That is to say,

¹ The incomplete teleology of Aristotle I leave for treatment elsewhere.

the *telos* of teleology implies that the end was somehow potentially present in the beginning, a hidden germ which in the course of time has become a manifest actuality. In a general way teleology, thus defined, is synonymous with evolution.

But there is a further distinction to note, since evolution may be understood in two quite different ways. By the first of these the end is indeed contained in the beginning, or *principium*, but unconsciously, as an immanent tendency to develop in a certain manner and towards a certain goal. And this process is clearly enough what we understand by scientific evolution in the Darwinian use of the word. It implies a thorough determinism, and is a desperate endeavour to cling to the facts of observation and to avoid the contaminating ideas of intuition. All which seems rational enough, until you venture to ask *why*. Just what is this immanent principle at work in the nature of things? What is the cause behind all this mechanical evolution? The point is that causality is an utterly human conception, and has no meaning outside of what we know intuitively of human activity. The only causal relation of which we have any comprehension is that between the proposal in my mind to do something and the doing of it, as the outcome of purpose; whereas all we get from observation, as Hume demonstrated finally, is a succession of unconnected events. Hence scientific evolution, having eschewed the intuitive sense of cause, has no resource but to fall back on an assumption of changes, or variations, that happen by pure chance. But a succession of haphazard changes leaves the orderly progress of the world quite unexplained; and recent attempts to circumvent the difficulties of Darwinism by the sub-

stitution of sudden emergence for gradual variation do not really bring any relief. And so, to account for observed orderliness of succession, the scientific evolutionist can only double chance with the mysterious fatalism of probability. The determinism that masquerades in the name of reason is thus a bare hypothesis of immanent law compounded of chance and probability, which are the very contrary of cause. I doubt whether the brain of man has ever devised a darker, more incomprehensible, more obscurant, and in the end more meaningless explanation of what we see happening in the world than the theory that things progress to some predetermined goal by some blind impulse within themselves which usurps the name of absolute causality. In the name of reason, what is this immanent law of which we have no knowledge either by observation or by intuition?

The serious question raised by the conception of evolution is thus, not whether the changes we observe are a gradual or sudden occurrence, but whether they are self-determined or designed, whether they are the result of immanent law or of external direction, whether, in any comprehensible sense of the word, they are uncaused or caused. Hence we are brought to another definition of evolution according to which the *telos* would not be present *in* the beginning but *at* the beginning in the form of a conscious plan. This definition implies an agent who, so to speak, has the end before his eye, or mind's eye, as a model or pattern to be imitated. The classical illustration of evolution so interpreted would be the architect who conceives the plan of a building, and thereupon proceeds to bring it into being by arrangement of the material at his disposal. Thus taken *telos* is a *prothesis*, a some-

thing proposed to be done, a purpose; purposive teleology is thoroughly anthropomorphic. And here this important corollary should be noted. A teleological view of evolution in this higher sense does not imply an automatic sort of progress in which each successive step must be regarded as an advance on the preceding, but, by the very fact of a dualism of forces, seen in the proposing agent and the material at his disposal, leaves the question of progress, of better and worse, to be decided by the nature of the change at any moment.

To sum up the argument, we may say that from the various meanings of *telos* it might be etymologically correct to use the term teleology of any one of these three conceptions of the cosmos: (1) as simply coming to an end and ceasing to be, or (2) as evolutionary in the sense of developing by the impulse of some immanent law to an end potentially present in the beginning, or (3) as guided to a foreseen consummation by some transcendent agent. Clearly this third proposition is the only one that embraces causality and purpose; it is the only one reached by inference from intuition; and it is this definition that I shall have in mind in my use of the word.

Now, as I have said, the whole movement of pre-Socratic philosophy was for a mechanical evolution that falls under the second of these definitions. The beginning of that movement came at the close of the sixth century B.C., when Thales of Miletus discarded the popular mythological stories of the origin of the world (which might have developed, but in fact never did develop, into a true teleology), and for them substituted a rationalized theory of determinism. It is probable that Thales wrote no philosophical trea-

tises, and certainly, if he did, they were lost at an early date; but from the report of Aristotle we can see pretty clearly the motive and direction of his thought. He was, to employ the expressive term coined I believe by Cudworth, the first of the hylozoists, that is to say, of those who held that life is an inseparable property of matter, not as a conscious will, nor even as a vitalistic energy peculiar to animal bodies, but as an energy indistinguishable from brute mass, such that matter of itself, by the immanent law of its own being, unfolds automatically from a primitive simplicity to the actual complex of phenomena as we know them.

Thales, for reasons into which we need not enter, thought of matter in its aboriginal form as water. He was followed by the line of so-called Ionian philosophers, who like him were hylozoists, and differed from him chiefly in regarding some other element than water—whether air or fire or just nameless unqualified matter—as the primitive stuff, and in giving various explanations, such as separation out, or thickening and thinning, or everlasting recurrence, to the manner of change. It sounds naïve no doubt in our ears to be told that water or air or fire is the primitive stuff out of which the manifold world evolves; but the choice of this or that element was rather accidental to their system, and the principle at which they were guessing—guessing in ignorance, if you will—was nevertheless the first recorded attempt in the West to arrive at an exclusively scientific philosophy, and was the father of such modern theories as Kant's primordial mist² and Huxley's chemistry of the brain and Haeckel's monism.

² Kant, *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*: "Bei einem auf solche Weise erfüllten Raum dauert die allge-

To pass by Empedocles and the Pythagoreans, the first genuinely philosophic break with the Ionian monism was made by Anaxagoras. This distinguished thinker was born in Clazomenae in 499/8 B.C., and thus preceded Socrates by only twenty-nine or thirty years. And Socrates may well have known him at Athens, where he lived and taught until, whether for his political association with Pericles or for his atheism, he was obliged to flee the city. His great originality was the introduction of a new principle, *nous*, reason, as the source of development from the chaotic infinite to an ordered finite; and it is no more than fair to add that this conception of reason as the guiding law of change was the most significant step in philosophy after the initial impulse to thinking given by Thales. But unfortunately Anaxagoras left the new idea open to serious ambiguity. At one time he seems to have thought of *nous* as a force apart from the elements, and as *coming* to them and effecting order by a process of sorting out the like and the unlike. But at another time he seems to have regarded reason, more in the fashion of Heraclitus and Democritus, as only a finer and simpler element among the other elements. He thus wavered, or at least to later commentators appeared to waver, between a dualism of mind and matter, with all its teleological possibilities, and a sort of hylozoistic monism, with its dead end in a Kantian *Urstoff* having within itself the source of motion and life.

meine Ruhe nur einen Augenblick. Die Elemente haben wesentliche Krafte, einander in Bewegung zu setzen, und sind sich selber eine Quelle des Lebens." The only real difference that I can see between Thales and Kant is that the naïveté of the former was childlike and that of the latter childish.

This I fear is a very jejune account of the great awakening of the intellect which goes under the general name of pre-Socratic philosophy. But it may suffice to show how, through what often appears as a childish sort of guessing, these hylozoists of Ionia in fact formulated that conception of the world as a self-expanding entity which has characterized, and still characterizes, our western scientific mode of thought. And then we come to Socrates.

There is a passage in the *Phaedo* in which Socrates, interrupting rather arbitrarily the long argument for the immortality of the soul on that last day of his life, tells his friends of his own intellectual conversion; and if any words put into the mouth of his master by Plato are genuine, these, I believe, are so.

In his youth the Platonic Socrates tells us, he had a keen desire to gain a knowledge of natural philosophy. (The reader of Aristophanes will recall the parody of the young scientist investigating by sound laboratory method "how many feet of its own a flea could jump.") But the result of these researches was so far from encouraging that it only served to show his own ignorance. Then in the midst of his perplexities he heard one reading from a treatise of Anaxagoras, in which that philosopher declared that reason (*nous*) is the directing cause of all things. This greatly pleased Socrates, who expected to find that all things were thus arranged in the best possible way, so that if any one wished to discover the cause of the origin, existence, or decay of anything, he would only have to find how it was best for the thing to arise, be, or decay. He expected, moreover, to learn not only the particular good which was the cause of each particular thing, but the common good which was the

cause of all. But when he read the book for himself his hopes were bitterly disappointed. He found that really Anaxagoras referred the order of the world not to reason at all as a cause, but to the physical properties of air, aether, water, etc. All this, says Socrates, is just as if a man, after saying that Socrates does everything by virtue of his reason, were to attempt to assign the causes of each particular act of Socrates by referring them, not to reason, but to the physical elements of which Socrates' body is composed. Thus, *e.g.*, he would say that the cause of Socrates' sitting there in prison was that his body was composed of bones and sinews, and that when the bones move in their sockets, the sinews by their contraction and relaxation make the body bend. Whereas "the real cause," Socrates declares, "of my sitting and conversing here is that it seemed best to the Athenians to condemn me, and that, therefore, it seemed to me better to sit here and submit to the sentence. The physical things (bones, sinews, air, etc.)," he continues, "are not *causes*, they are necessary conditions without which the real cause—my choice of what I deem best—could not take effect, and it is very unphilosophical to confuse the cause with the condition." All these physical philosophers then, with their vortices, air, etc., are just groping in the dark, overlooking the true cause which binds all things together—the Good.³

Now I make no apology for dwelling at such length on this passage from the *Phaedo*, since it describes, I firmly believe, the most important and significant and

³ This summary is taken almost verbatim, with some omissions, from Frazer's *Growth of Plato's Ideal Theory*, an essay written in 1879 but not published until 1930.

revolutionary event in the whole vast range of philosophy. Neither am I going—at least I hope I am not going—to expound the experience of Socrates in such a manner as to render complicated what is so simple and to make metaphysical what is preciously naïve. But I would call attention to the very obvious fact that Socrates' conversion as narrated by himself is exactly a turning away from trust in the outward-looking senses as the interpreters of ultimate reality to such a trust in intuition as we dealt with in our former lecture on the source of faith. The reason of Anaxagoras, which seemed to break through the circle of Ionian materialism, was in fact no new immaterial cause, but another name for the old hylozoistic determinism inferred from the processes of nature. It is purely mechanical in its operation and leaves no place for human freedom and purpose. As Socrates complains, "of the obligatory and containing power of goodness" Anaxagoras thought no more than did his predecessors. On the contrary it is precisely this free purpose of goodness that Socrates, calling it by the same name of reason (*nous*), lays hold of to explain why he remains in gaol, though, if he obeyed the immanent law of his bones and muscles, they would be carrying him off to Megara or elsewhere.

To this point there can be little doubt of the authenticity of the sentiment put into the mouth of Socrates. Everything we know of him points to the fact that he did, so far as conduct is concerned, reject the deterministic implications of the philosophy of his day for an ethical teleology based on the innate recognition of the good as the end of life. And it is in this way we should understand the familiar saying that he brought philosophy down from heaven (meaning the phys-

ical phenomena of the skies) to earth. But the answer is not so easy when we ask how far he went in carrying over the immediate datum of intuition into a theory of the cosmos itself. Here we cannot be sure that Plato did not read his own speculations into the teaching of his master. Plato, as we shall see, reached a completely teleological philosophy by developing on parallel lines the doctrine of Ideas and the belief in God as the two cooperative causes of order in the phenomenal world of our observation; and the problem is to know how much of this development was original with him and how much of it was taken over directly from Socrates. Here we can only conjecture. But I believe it safe to say that both a rudimentary doctrine of Ideas and a conception of the Divine pointing towards theism, out of which Plato was to construct his cosmic theory, were Socratic.

However that may be, it would appear that Plato himself was aware of the rather devious course by which he attained his goal, and that he has deliberately left guideposts in his writings for the instruction of any attentive reader. I do not see why otherwise the four dialogues which mark the steps of his progress are so linked together that they stand out almost as a separate treatise within the larger bulk of his works. First we have the *Gorgias*, which indicates reasons for clinging to the doctrine of Ideas, though the doctrine itself is scarcely mentioned. This is followed by the *Republic*, which in the first book virtually duplicates the main discussion of the *Gorgias* and then proceeds to elevate the doctrine of Ideas to the highest point of independence. With the *Republic* the *Timaeus* is linked in somewhat similar manner, only here the introduction is a professed summary of the political

argument of the earlier dialogue, while the rôle of Ideas is not so much expanded as contracted by subordinating them to God as the efficient cause of creation. And lastly the *Laws*, in the tenth book, quite explicitly repeats the three theses of the hypothesis upon which the Ideal doctrine of the *Republic* was based, and categorically rejects them for another hypothesis by which Ideas are so subordinated to the divine Agent of justice as almost to disappear from view. Our business is to discover how the elements necessary for a full-fledged teleology gradually emerge as Plato passes from one phase of thought to another in this epitome of his philosophical development.

The *Gorgias* is a dialogue to which I return always with enhanced admiration of its superlative beauty and significance. In it Plato gathers up all that he had learned from his teacher, and from it proceeds on lines of his own speculation. The dramatic setting of the piece you will remember. Socrates is carried to the hall where Gorgias, the famed sophist out of Sicily, has been giving a public display of his skill in speaking, and the newcomer, after his cool fashion, inquires what this rhetoric may be for which the young men of the cities are flocking about its professor and paying huge sums for instruction. It is an art, replies Polus, a sort of henchman of Gorgias, the art of persuasion, and as such enables its votaries to exert influence over individuals and assemblies. But, says Socrates, these matters of debate in which the rhetorician exercises his influence can ordinarily be reduced to a question of justice and injustice, right and wrong. Must then the pupil of rhetoric know what justice or right is in itself, or is it sufficient that he be instructed simply in the method of making any opinion prevail?

Only that, replies Polus. Then, says Socrates, rhetoric is no art at all but just a low sort of cunning in flattery.

Polus merely reaffirms his statement. Your argument is very subtle and very nice, he rejoins to Socrates, but here is the fact : rhetoric as the art of persuasion does enable a man to control others, and so to accomplish whatever he may desire. You may sneer at the means, but wherever you go you will find that the pupils of rhetoric are actually the men of power and so the possessors of happiness. I deny the fact, is Socrates' answer. Power is the ability to achieve what a man really and ultimately wants, and to do this he must know what he wants. Through the cunning of rhetoric a man may make himself tyrant of a city, and so able to exile whomsoever he desires and to slay whomsoever he desires. But in doing this he may in fact be working against his own interest. He has no real power until he knows what is finally good for him, and no real happiness until his will is set upon that good.

The difference between Polus and Socrates might be summed up in two phrases signifying respectively : (1) what seems to a man good, what a man at any passing moment may desire, and (2) the good which a man, from the bottom of his heart, finally wants. Mere skill and cunning may help him to acquire the pleasures momentarily desired ; to attain the happiness which he really craves he must know himself and those principles of justice and injustice which are the laws of his being. And such knowledge is the province of philosophy, not of rhetoric.

Polus, by arguments which, it must be acknowledged, are sometimes superficially fallacious, is reduced to self-contradiction and from that to sullen

acquiescence. Whereupon Callicles, who has been listening to the debate with increasing restlessness, suddenly breaks in with the complaint that Gorgias and Polus have been brought to contradict themselves because they were too much of gentlemen to stick to their thesis that justice and injustice, as Socrates defines them, are empty words and have nothing to do with happiness. He, Callicles, will make no concession to popular prejudice, but will maintain the naked truth. And the truth is simply this, that *nomos* (convention, tradition, law) and *physis* (nature) are two quite different things, so different as to be at variance one with the other. Justice as defined by the one is exactly the injustice of the other, and so of injustice; and you, Socrates, he declares, have thrown Gorgias and Polus into confusion because they did not detect your trickery in slipping from one to the other use of these ambiguous terms. In nature, justice is the right of the stronger man to get what he can. In truth a man is nothing else but a bundle of desires, each of which is directed to the attainment of a particular pleasure, and happiness is the reward of the man who is able to satisfy the greatest number of his desires and to the fullest extent. Most men, however, are not strong, but weak, and so we see this curious result. The many weak, who really hold precisely the same opinion as the strong, but who know that by the rule of unchecked nature they should come off very ill indeed, get together and establish certain laws of conventional justice, whereby it is declared wrong to use any means at one's disposal for the fulfilment of each and every desire. I, the law decrees, must limit my ambition by the rule of equality; I must forgo those natural pleasures the enjoyment of which will

encroach on the pleasures of my neighbour, and in return he must forgo some of his natural pleasures. And thus is nature ousted by what may be called a social pact of the many. But the simple truth remains unaffected, that by the very constitution of his being every man grasps at every good thing which he has the strength and wisdom to compass. All which, Socrates, you really know in your heart as well as I do; but you have been led to support the popular fallacy by your inveterate love of philosophizing. Now philosophy is an excellent part of education, and there is no disgrace to a young man in pursuing such a study; in fact I regard one who neglects philosophy in his youth as an inferior sort of mind, who will never probably aspire to anything great or noble. But if I see him continuing the study in later life, I should like to beat him, for, however good his natural part may be, he grows effeminate, and so through the belief in conventional justice loses the power of fulfilling his own simplest desires or even of taking any care of himself. And thus I fear it is with you, Socrates. For suppose some one were to carry you off to court and charge you with crimes of which you are innocent, what would you do? There you would stand giddy and gaping, with not a word to say for yourself, all because of your false and silly notion of justice. And if your accuser, however poor a creature he might be, should claim the penalty of death against you, die you would for all your philosophy. Then what is the value of "An art which converts a man of sense to a fool"?

The thesis of Callicles, it will be noted, is to this extent like that of Socrates, that it seems to be based on pure intuition. Equally with Socrates, he sees that

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man's conduct is not, as might be inferred from the observation of external phenomena, determined by mechanical laws, but that, to use the sceptic's terminology, man by an immediate affection knows himself to be a creature of purpose with freedom to act accordingly. It is the strong and clever man whom Callicles holds up as a model, the man who understands what his nature is and feels within himself the capacity to satisfy the impulses of nature. The difference is this: Callicles recognizes two factors of intuition, viz. purpose and freedom, but overlooks the third factor, responsibility, whereas Socrates admits all three of these elements into his conception of nature, and perceives, as Aristotle was to argue later, that the immediate sense of responsibility involved in our intuitive distinction of right and wrong, and shown in our self-approbation and self-depreciation, cannot be eliminated from consciousness, that it is indeed the ultimate fact, without which purpose and freedom cease to have any sure direction and leave man a prey to his superficial and ever fluctuating desires. Socrates' method of demonstrating this truth is to drive his antagonist from point to point, from desire to ever lower desire, until he reaches a pleasure which Callicles repudiates as in itself undesirable—undesirable not because its attainment would conflict with the satisfaction of other desires or would diminish the total sum of pleasures, but because it is repugnant in itself. In other words, Socrates simply forces Callicles to admit that at a certain point his freedom and purpose are controlled by a judgement which depends solely on the distinction between right and wrong and has nothing to do with a merely quantitative measurement of pleasures.

The argument is back to the point at which Polus left it, only now we see more clearly why happiness does not come automatically with the power to fulfil whatever desires may spring up in a man at this or that moment, and why it is not equivalent to the sum of pleasures, but depends on the knowledge of the good as the true end of man and on the will to pursue that end. Because, Socrates says to Callicles,

"Because, if you remember, Polus and I have agreed that all our actions are to be done for the sake of the good;—and will you agree with us in saying that the good is the end of all our actions, and that all our actions are to be done for the sake of the good, and not the good for the sake of them?"

Now in this whole contention against the sophists I would first have you remark that we are moving within the field of pure ethics, with no excursion into what was to be the special subject of Platonic speculation. To both Callicles and Socrates life is teleological in so far as conduct should be purposively directed to the end of happiness; but they stop just there, and indulge in no theory of cosmic teleology whether evolutionary or theistic. (I pass over the myth at the end of the dialogue, which is no integral part of the argument.) In other words they are both arguing from premisses admissible by a sceptic who limits knowledge to the immediate affections and rejects the claims either of rationalism or of faith to modify or supplement what is thus known. And as their agreement (for without some common ground of assent there would be no discussion but only wrangling vociferation) springs from what is practically a mutual consent to keep the debate within the bounds thus imposed by scepticism, so their disagreement corresponds to the divergence of the two kinds of

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scepticism which may be described as the incomplete and the complete. On the one side Callicles will admit only the physical affections as immediate and real, and therefore as alone significant for ethics, meaning by these the sensations of pleasure and pain, with the accompaniment of desire and aversion. On the other side Socrates, admitting these as real, will have it that there is also a whole range of noetic, or spiritual, affections, such as the immediate sense of right-doing and wrong-doing, with the accompanying consciousness of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Socrates thus pretends (or would have so pretended were the terminology in vogue at the time) to be the complete sceptic because his appeal is to the whole of what is immediately intuited by every man, when, forgetting the clamour of the market-place, he listens to the still small voice within his own breast, whereas Callicles has suffered one-half of the facts of intuition to be obscured by a sort of conventional theory drawn by inference from observation of what the rich and powerful of the world are actually doing. So Socrates declares :

"I consider that nothing worth speaking of will have been effected by me unless I make you the one witness of my words; nor by you, unless you make me the one witness of yours; no matter about the rest of the world. . . . For, indeed, we are at issue about matters which to know is honourable and not to know disgraceful; to know or not to know happiness and misery."

And, further, I would have you remark that not only is the debate kept strictly within the field of pure ethics but is concerned with the one fundamental and irreconcilable problem of ethics. It will be seen that the theses of both Socrates and Callicles, in so far as they agree in being teleological, imply an ulti-

mate dualism, but of a different kind. To Callicles, with his imperfect grasp of human nature, there can be no dualism within a man himself, who is simply a bundle of upsurging desires ; the antagonisms of life lie between the individual and society, as the desires of the one come into conflict with the desires of the rest of mankind. Nor is there any dualism of right and wrong within nature, but an irreconcilable warfare between the justice of nature and the so-called justice of law, or convention, over which the only umpire is might. To Socrates, on the contrary, the real dualism lies within the individual man himself, and the ethical law demands that a man should be master of himself, or stronger than himself, *kreittōn heautou*, a phrase perfectly unmeaning to Callicles.

And so by a long circuit we are brought back to the question of rhetoric with which the discussion opened. By the sophists rhetoric was acclaimed as the art of persuasion which enabled the practitioner to sway the minds of men at his pleasure and so to win the mastery over society. To Socrates, unless it was directed to the instruction of others in the truth of justice and injustice (a truth which the sophist either denied or disregarded), it was no art at all but a trick of flattery, base and generally futile when employed to delude others in the court or the assembly, utterly ugly and ruinous when used by a man to deceive himself into thinking that there is no evil rooted in his nature and that to be happy he need only let himself go.

Now it used to be supposed that the ethical amorality put into the mouth of Polus and Callicles was a malicious invention of Plato ; but the recent discovery of a papyrus shows that one sophist at least, a certain

Antiphon, had written a treatise advocating precisely such a theory.⁴ And without waiting for such a discovery we might have known from the debate between the Athenian envoys and the magistrates of Melos, as reported by Thucydides in his fifth book, how far the political thinking of the age was governed by the same notions. And from that day to ours the sophistical theory of ethics has not lacked advocates. It was from Plato's Calicles, and from Thucydides' history which he translated, that Hobbes derived his distinction between man in the state of nature and man under the convention of the social contract. In the natural state man is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish"; the master motive of all his actions is defined in the famous phrase of the *Leviathan* as "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death." The justice of nature as opposed in the Calliclean sense to the justice of convention could not be placed in the saddle more emphatically as the rule of life. And then, in the *Elements of Law*, we see Hobbes endeavouring to show how out of the clash of motives so determined the principles of social justice come into being by a sort of mechanical cancelling out. In other words Hobbes first assumes the position of Calicles, and then undertakes to prove that in practice it will coincide with the position of Socrates—than which a prettier case of eating one's cake and having it could not be devised.

From Hobbes the Calliclean notion of the social contract passes to Rousseau—but with a difference. Under the new sentimentalism the individual is by nature a pure and unselfish and socially minded crea-

⁴ See Ernest Barker, *Greek Political Theory*, 66.

ture, but becomes impure and selfish and unsocial through the corrupting influence of society. By a curious turn given to the social contract, conceived as the *volonté générale*, society is to be converted into an instrument of advance instead of an instrument of corruption, and all the troubles of the world will cease to be.

In one sense the conclusion of Callicles is thus inverted by Hobbes, while his premiss is inverted by Rousseau; but the essential point of the sophistical theory nevertheless remains unaltered. Both Hobbes and Rousseau dismiss the Socratic dualism within the man himself for the Calliclean dualism between a man and society. Both, so far as the individual is concerned, admit the intuition of freedom and purpose, while equally they reject the law of personal responsibility depending on the intuition of right and wrong. Theoretically they may seem to arrive at opposite poles, in so far as to Hobbes man is conscious only of evil as the primitive impulse of his nature, whereas to Rousseau he is conscious rather of good; but practically they are at one with each other and with their forerunner in so far as their ethical monism eliminates the need of any inner voluntary control, and they are alike in this that each flatters the individual by making social morality the outcome of allowing each man to pursue his natural desires. And in one form or the other the ethics of Callicles passing through these channels is still dominant in our sociological theories.

Over against this stream of influence we have the ethics of Socrates as it was developed by Plato, and so handed down to the world.

III

PLATONIC IDEALISM

THE whole argument between Socrates and the sophists in the *Gorgias*, as we have seen, is directed to prove that the good man, simply as the possessor of goodness, is happy; and it ends with a paean of victory—*quod est demonstrandum*. Yet if the method of proof be examined it turns out to be rather disappointingly negative. Socrates overcomes Polus and Callicles by reducing their contention to an absurdity; but plainly they are silenced rather than convinced, and at the last Socrates himself, after reaffirming his thesis with almost stunning audacity, suddenly draws back into his wonted scepticism: “For my position has always been, that I myself am ignorant how these things are, but that I have never met a man who could say otherwise, any more than you can, without appearing ridiculous.”

That fairly lame and impotent conclusion on the heels of so bold an assertion might be put down to the Socratic irony, yet I take it to be not so much a pretended ignorance as a genuine humility. I think we may be pretty sure that the premisses and conclusions of the *Gorgias*, though the dramatic presentation of the debate is no doubt Plato’s invention, came straight from the living Socrates. The outcome clearly is to leave us with the conviction that any attempt

to explain the conduct of men without taking into account their sense of responsibility to the intuitive discriminations of right and wrong must inevitably break down against the facts of human experience. But is this all? Can the philosopher do no more than defend himself against the attacks of sophistry? When asked in turn for a positive demonstration of his ethical creed, shall he only say: I am ignorant how these things are? Is there no way in which he can confirm the insistent voice of conscience by glimpses of a similar power at work in the universe at large? It may be that the problem must be left where Socrates leaves it; but at least the main endeavour of Plato in his later dialogues will be to give a more satisfactory answer to these questions.

And the first step in the Platonic development would seem to follow immediately upon the conclusion of the *Gorgias*. The desires which Callicles presents as belonging to the natural man are very urgent and are directed to very palpable objects of the phenomenal world; and the pleasures of attainment are very sweet. There needs no argument to tell us, no exhortation to persuade us, that in the pursuit of these desires and the gustation of these pleasures we are moving in a realm of insistent reality. Yet in face of the certainty of these physical sensations Socrates declares that they fade into insignificance beside the deeper reality of a quite different sphere of experience. These cravings of the body, he asserts, are pallid and ephemeral moods in comparison with the steady ineradicable want of the soul, this instinctive ambition to dominate others but a shadowy reflection of the need for self-mastery, these pleasures of satisfied desire are bought at a ruinous price if they interfere with the soul's happy-

ness of self-approval. And Socrates is almost diabolically clever in breaking down the cynical position of his opponents. But is his own noetic philosophy any less vulnerable? Does it offer anything tenable in place of the naturalism he has undermined, or does it leave us with the gloomy foreboding that nothing matters and nothing is worthwhile? Can he show that this deeper want of the soul to which he appeals has any external justification, or is it merely a longing for something unattainable because non-existent? Is this vaunted happiness a mere illusion of possession where there is nothing to possess? Are justice and righteousness anything more than phantoms evoked by the soul to people its own emptiness? You call them Ideas, the antagonists of Socrates might have said, but are they true things in any such sense as the body and the material objects of the natural world are true things? Can we see them, or taste them or handle them, or in any way derive enjoyment out of them? And to all these implied questions Socrates could only reply: "I myself am ignorant how these things are."

And so we have a series of dialogues, the *Meno*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedo*, in which Plato laid out all his superb powers as a poet to clothe Ideas in such splendour of the imagination that, though we might not prove their existence by the compelling method of logic, we should nevertheless feel their reality as objects of desire which could be set over against the palpable world of the senses. In the first of these dialogues, the *Meno*, the effort is to impart to Ideas the cogency of things seen by referring our knowledge of them to actual vision in a former life, and at the same time to account for their dim fragility,

so to speak, by the fact that in this present life we possess only a memory of that vision.

The *Phaedrus*, taking up this notion of reminiscence, pictures our ante-natal experience in the form of a myth of the soul driving her chariot in a procession of the gods up to the summit of the heavenly arch, and there, while in that company it is swept onward by the revolution of the spheres, having sight of the things beyond—justice and beauty and temperance and all the choir of virtues, not as we in this life have glimpses of them clogged and clouded by earthly conditions, but in their utter purity and reality, as Ideas unsheathed of matter. And then by some ill-hap the soul sinks beneath the double load of forgetfulness and ignoble passions, and so, losing her wings and falling to this nether sphere, is encased in a mortal body like an oyster in his shell. Nevertheless the vision is not altogether lost, but remains to the soul as the flashing and vanishing recollection of things seen long ago. And thus it is. He who has been the spectator of many glories in the other world is amazed when he meets here with a godlike face or form, and is drawn to union with such a person as if he had stumbled upon a precious embodiment of the divine beauty. At first a shudder runs through him, and again the old awe steals over him, and if he were not afraid of being thought a downright madman he would sacrifice to his beloved as to the image of a god. But as he continues to gaze there is a sort of reaction, and by the influence of beauty through the eyes he feels a new growth and moisture in those wings of the soul which had shrivelled in his downward fall, and a great longing seizes him to mount once more through the heavens, up and on to that

vision of the Ideal beauty which he had almost forgotten and of which he is now so miraculously reminded.

And again, in the *Symposium*, giving now a new turn to the myth of recollection and speaking through the mouth of an inspired prophetess, Plato describes the love of beautiful bodies as an initiation into the mysteries whereby the soul is led on step by step up the celestial ladder until she is able to contemplate true beauty, the divine Idea pure and clear and unalloyed, as it lies before the eye of deity, and so becomes a begetter of immortal realities, even as she is immortal, if any soul of man may be. It is in this hope that the *Phaedo* rises to a chant of victory over death. "Many a man," says Socrates, the notorious lover of all beauty,—"many a man has been willing to go to the world below animated by the hope of seeing there an earthly love, or wife, or son, and conversing with them. And will he who is a true lover of wisdom, and is strongly persuaded in like manner that only in the world below he can worthily enjoy her, still repine at death? Will he not depart with joy? Surely he will, O my friend, if he be a true philosopher. For he will have a firm conviction that there, and there only, he can find wisdom in her purity." (Jowett's translation.)

But it is an ill business to paraphrase or abridge the writing of a great poet. My only aim in attempting so thankless a task is to show how in these dialogues of Plato's middle period the Ideas which before had been taken for granted are forced into the forefront of his thought, and how the poet, taking up the argument of the *Gorgias* where the dialectician had left it, turns to the imagination for evidence that the Ideal

world can awaken a love deeper and stronger and more awarding than any passionate longing for the powers or pleasures afforded by the world. And it may be that here, rather than in the dialectician, we have the Plato who has brought courage to so many frightened minds. It may be that now, as in his day and always, our failure is not so much of the intellect as of the imagination. Not because of ignorance do we drag out our lives in the pursuit of material pleasures that satiate while they do not satisfy; rather it would seem to be because the faculty of realization is dull and slack and has so intermittent a grasp upon the things which we know to make for happiness and peace. Certainly today at least our disease is chiefly of the imagination; we are poisoned by our poets. Yet the reason too has its claims, and still the query of the *Gorgias* is left unanswered: I know that these things are, but *how* they are I know not. In the *Republic* Plato will become the dialectician again and endeavour to give a rational explanation of the *how*.

This connection between the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* is not fanciful. In the first book of the *Republic*, written we may suppose a number of years after the *Gorgias*, the discussion between Socrates and Callicles is substantially repeated, and with the same conclusion. We see Socrates, by somewhat different arguments of course, turning into ridicule the same naturalistic thesis now put into the mouth of a professional sophist, Thrasymachus, and ending himself with the same admission of ignorance. "The result of the whole discussion," he says, "has been that I 'know nothing at all; for while I do not know what justice itself is, I am not likely to know whether it is a kind

of virtue or not, nor can I tell whether he who has it is happy or not."

The indication is clear enough that in the *Republic* Plato was proposing to write a sequel to the earlier dialogue. And to that end Socrates now is not allowed to escape into his ivory tower of ignorance. At the beginning of the next book we find two of his young friends, actual brothers of Plato in fact, laying hold of the wily old sceptic and putting him to the question. I wish, says one of them, you would listen to me, for I think that Thrasymachus threw away his case too soon, succumbing like a snake under the eye of a charmer. This is what I want to hear: your own definition of justice and its powers, and whether of itself, quite apart from any pleasures and pains that may be picked up by the way, it is sufficient always and automatically to render its possessor happy. And so the brothers lay down the terms of the new argument in the form of a startling hypothesis: You, Socrates, are to imagine two men, one perfectly just but reputed unjust, and made to endure the utmost tortures inflicted upon the worst sort of criminal, the other perfectly unjust but reputed just, and so rewarded with all the pleasures and blessings this world can afford. You are to take these two men as they are; there is to be no reversal of their conditions in this life or another, and no hope of reversal. You are to suppose that no gods are, or that if they are they pay no heed to the affairs of mankind, or that if they pay heed they can be placated with a few cheap prayers and sacrifices. You are always talking about justice and happiness, Socrates; tell us now which of these two men is happy, and why.

The ultimate problem of ethics could not be expressed more sharply, and Socrates accepts it—or, rather, Plato accepts it as the form in which it had been bequeathed to him by Socrates, and which he will endeavour to solve in the person of Socrates. What follows, then, is substantially a continuation of the *Gorgias*; it will undertake to define the nature of justice, which was taken for granted in the earlier dialogue, and will then show *how* the possession of this quality produces happiness. Briefly then, Plato deals first with the nature of justice psychologically and politically as shown in the individual and in the State. For the former, as is well known, he arrives at his definition by analysing the soul of the individual into three faculties and determining the proper (that is the "just") relation of these, one to the other, in the total action of the soul. On the one side he discovers in man the faculty of reason, over against which he sets the two other faculties of concupiscence and of what we designate as the personal emotions of honour, pride, indignation (*to thymoeides*). Now the healthy state of a man depends, he says, on the dominance of the reasoning, judicial faculty over the upsurging, or insurging, desires of concupiscence, which of themselves are limited by no principle of restraint and hence of themselves have no power of producing an harmonious balance. In the resultant conflict between these desires and the selecting restraining power of reason the middle faculty of personal emotions has an ambiguous position; generally indeed it is on the side of reason, but on occasion may range itself with the physical desires. Thus we arrived in the fourth book at the famous psychological definition of justice as that balance of the faculties in which each plays its

own part without encroaching on the field of the others:

But in reality justice was such as we were describing, being concerned, however, not with the outward man, but with the inward, which is the true self and concernment of man: for the just man does not permit the several elements within him to interfere with one another, or any of them to do the work of the others,—he sets in order his own inner life, and is his own master and his own law, and at peace with himself; and when he has bound together the three principles within him . . . and is no longer many, but has become one entirely temperate and perfectly adjusted nature, then he proceeds to act, if he has to act, whether in a matter of property, or in the treatment of the body, or in some affair of politics or private business; always thinking and calling that which preserves and cooperates with this harmonious condition, just and good action, and the knowledge which presides over it, wisdom, and that which at any time impairs this condition, he will call unjust action, and the opinion which presides over it ignorance. (Jowett's translation.)

Such is Plato's famous definition of justice; and it will be observed that, so far, he has scarcely advanced beyond an analysis and expansion of the phrase in the *Gorgias*, "master of one's self (*kreittōn heautou*)," which Socrates had there asserted as the norm of conduct against the Calliclean "master of others." Now it is true that Callicles exclaimed at the Socratic formula as an unmeaning absurdity, but if one reads his statements carefully, one sees that really he is not objecting to the law of self-mastery itself so much as to a certain implication which in fact Socrates proceeds forthwith to draw from it. Callicles was no fool. He did not mean, however extravagant his language may sound, that all desires are to be authorized equally and indiscriminately. He knew that one pleasure may be incompatible with the enjoyment of another and more desirable pleasure. He knew that a certain judgement must be exercised in

selecting the desires to be preferred. He declares with indignation that of course the successful man must be wise in a fashion as well as strong, and he would have admitted that the mastery of others requires a certain mastery of the concupiscent element in one's self. What he repudiates is the implication that the choice among desires should be governed by a criterion of right and wrong independent of, and superior to, pleasure, and that self-mastery implies responsibility to a law exterior to the will of the individual man. And if Callicles had been the interlocutor of Socrates in the *Republic*, instead of the amiable Glaucon, he would have maintained the same attitude as in the *Gorgias* and for the same reasons. He would have contended against the psychological definition of justice in the fourth book only because it implied the existence of justice as an Idea, or independent entity, to which the soul is held responsible, and by the possession of which the soul is happy; and until these implications were drawn out and authenticated nothing would have been accomplished. Plato is aware of this, and the conclusion of the fifth book of the *Republic* with the whole of the sixth and seventh is just such an argument inserted like a wedge, rather abruptly it must be admitted, between the fourth book and its continuation in the eighth. The implied criterion of justice and injustice, right and wrong, now appears as a reasoned assent to the exigent reality of those Ideas which had been hinted at in the *Gorgias* and then in the following dialogues had been turned over to be wrapped about with all the symbolical trappings of a great poet's imagination. So it is that the psychological treatment of justice as a balance of faculties passes into a fully developed philosophy.

of Ideas. The actual transition occurs in the discussion of the State, when Socrates, pressed by the difficulties of realizing his ideal community, makes this admission, in a sentence more often quoted perhaps than any other in all the dialogues : "Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, . . . cities will never rest from their evils—no, nor the human race, as I believe—and then only will this our State have a possibility of life and behold the light of day." Whereupon follows the definition of the philosopher himself as one in whom reason, now directed by the love and knowledge of Ideas, is lord of the other faculties, as he is to be the lord of the people.

This new position, as it is set forth in the marvellous close of the fifth book, involves a double dichotomy, objective and subjective. On one side of the dividing line stands the Idea, let us say of justice (Plato in fact uses the Idea of beauty for his illustration, but the method is the same),—the fixed, unchanging law, or principle, or fact, by participation in which this or that act is just and is so recognized by us. On the other side are ranged those acts which are more or less just as their participation in the Idea is more or less complete. That is the objective division; and with it corresponds the subjective dichotomy. There is the man who recognizes the existence of justice in itself and does not confuse the Idea with the acts which participate in the Idea, neither putting the acts in the place of the Idea, nor the Idea in the place of the acts. Such an one, we should say, is truly awake, and in possession of true knowledge. Over against him is the man who, though he may call this or that act just, has no sense of justice in itself, or

who, if another lead him towards a knowledge of that Idea, is unable to follow. He, Plato would say, is not awake but in a kind of dream state; for the dreamer, whether actually asleep or not, is one who confuses dissimilar things and takes the copy for the reality. Instead of knowing he opines, and instead of knowledge has only opinions.

It will be seen that these ethical distinctions are drawn from the field of intuition, and that they pretend to be a verifiable extension of the knowledge involved in the facts of intuitive experience. The foundation goes down to that immediate sense of right and wrong which is instinctive in all men, and to that corresponding sense of freedom and responsibility which manifests itself in self-approval or disapproval as we act in one way or another. Intuition to this extent, that we have such a feeling, and so limited, is a part of universal consciousness, a matter of knowledge, not of inference or conjecture, against which any arguments from the other half of our experience are powerless. And the doctrine of Ideas, at the last analysis, is no more than an assertion that with the inner sense of responsibility we are bound, if we reflect honestly, to believe in the existence of something to which we are responsible, something external to ourselves in so far as we neither make nor unmake it, neither alter nor escape, that there are fixed standards of right and wrong under which we are held to account in our choice of conduct, whether we comprehend them or not, exactly as we are subject to the laws of the physical world whether we comprehend them or not. The doctrine of Ideas is thus not an immediate and integral part of consciousness which cannot be denied, nor is it like theism a more or less

voluntary inference from conscience, but rather a logical, reasonable, and—to the Platonist—certain corollary of conscience, however it may be disputed. Philosophy is the acceptance of this corollary as true, the determination to hold fast to it despite all the decoys of false reasoning, and the pursuit of its ramifications into the wide fields of thought and fancy.

So defined, the Ideas essential to what we mean by Platonism are really simple enough, whatever demands they may make upon our credence. But we have yet to reckon with the fact that to Plato there are Ideas derived straight from observation as well as these ethical and aesthetic Ideas which belong to what we know by intuition. Here is a matter, then, that must be cleared up before we go further, and this can best be done by analysing the process by which the two kinds of Ideas are formed in the mind. We perceive particular concrete objects, men for instance, Socrates and Coriscus, Peter and Paul. These are data of immediate observation, things seen. But these men have each certain qualities which carry us from the field of observation to that of intuition. We say that this particular act of Peter is just, in which case we are not merely reporting what we observe (we see Peter acting, not the quality of his act), but are valuing what we observe. We have an intuitive appreciation of our own acts as brave, or just, or what not, and such qualities by a process of transference we attach to another person's acts. These are specifically ethical judgements, to which correspond our aesthetic judgements, though the latter are rather more intimately bound up with actual observation. We perceive that Peter has a particular colour, but the appre-

ciation of that colour as beautiful or ugly is a judgement that wells out of the field of intuition just as do our ethical judgements. There are then two fields of experience, the observation of particular things and the intuitive valuation of particular qualities; and in each of these fields there are corresponding Ideas. Thus, for example, Plato talks of the Idea man, not these individual men Peter and Paul, but generic man; again not manhood as an attribute peculiar severally to Peter and Paul, but an objective entity by the possession of which, or the presence of which, Peter and Paul are both men. And, in the other field, Plato talks of Ideas corresponding to particular ethical and aesthetic qualities, the Idea justice by participation in which, or by the presence of which, this particular act or man is declared to be just; and so of the Idea beauty and the beautiful act or object.

Now the notable and, it must be admitted, somewhat confusing fact is that, though Plato himself nowhere distinguishes formally between these two kinds of Ideas, yet the distinction cuts to the very root of his philosophy, and to neglect it is to miss the heart of what we call Platonism. The importance of the point I would make can be indicated by a single word: one set of Ideas have *opposites*, whereas the other set have not. Thus the Idea man is different indeed from the Idea horse, just as the particular man is different from the particular horse; yet in neither case can we properly speak of opposition. On the other side the ethical Idea goodness has an opposite in badness, just as a good act is opposite to a bad act; and the aesthetic Idea beauty has its opposite in ugliness just as a beautiful thing is opposite to an ugly thing. And it will be seen at once that the existence or

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non-existence of these oppositions makes all the difference in the world in our practical relation to the two kinds of Ideas. The Ideas of visible things may concern the intellect, but, for the very reason that they have no opposites, they leave our other faculties untouched. And it was in the main over these observational Ideas, if we may so call them, that the mediaeval schoolmen waged their fruitless debate to determine whether they were *universalia ante rem* or *universalia post rem*. The logical faculty may have been sharpened to a razor edge, but if any other human faculty, or indeed any human interest, got involved in that windy logomachy, it was incidentally and through the dragging in of Ideas of another sort.

On the other side it will be seen at once that ethical and aesthetic Ideas, owing to the fact that their negatives have the character of opposites, and that their negation leaves you a prey to these opposites, bring into play not only the intellectual faculty but the emotions and the will. You are going to feel and act about the same whether you believe in the Idea of some group of visible things as a *universal ante rem* or regard it as an abstract generalization *post rem*; you are going to feel and act very differently if you do or do not believe in the Idea of such a quality, or value, as justice.

To illustrate. You are going to ride in the same way whether you believe that the Idea horse is a mere concept abstracted from observing particular horses, or that somehow it preexisted before ever a particular horse was seen. A horse will be the same thing to you and your horsemanship will be unaffected whether or no you believe in what a contemporary of Plato ridiculed as "horseness." But you are going

to ride that horse into battle with a different feeling and to a different purpose if you believe that there is such a thing as veritable justice and that the course in which you engaged is, within the limits of human error, on the side of justice, or if you disbelieve in any fixed canon of right and wrong. In the latter case, if you deny the reality of such a standard and think of justice and injustice as constantly shifting opinions—this and nothing more—what heart and vigour shall you have in the moral conflicts of life? Must it not happen, if you cling persistently to your belief—rather to your unbelief—that you will take your conduct rather lightly, and that in the end, when belief works itself out in act, as in the end belief and unbelief have a way of doing, conscience will degenerate into a shifty sort of opportunism and so in practice, under the sway of the thronging passions, will become the champion of what is the opposite of justice? And in like manner that synthesis of feeling and emotion and judgement which we call taste will be affected by your belief or disbelief in the Idea of beauty.¹

Evidently one's attitude towards the purely intellectual concepts, the Ideas of things, is a matter of slight significance, whereas one's attitude towards ethical and aesthetic Ideas is the most important fact,

¹ The distinction between Ideas of things and Ideas of qualities, though it is fundamental to any sound and practical understanding of Plato, has been strangely neglected by most of the commentators. I did myself call attention to it in my early volumes on *Platonism* and *The Christ of the New Testament*, but I might have dealt with the subject more thoroughly had I known Sir James Frazer's little treatise on *The Growth of Plato's Ideal Theory*, then still in manuscript.—For a fuller exposition of the fourfold line and the place of Ideas see Appendix A.

as it is the deciding factor, of one's whole noetic life. I think, indeed I am very sure, that the general disappearance of belief in the Platonic Ideas, or perhaps it would be better to say the loss of belief in the everlasting truth which Plato dressed up in the doctrine of Ideas, has been the chief cause of the present débâcle of morals and art.

And so we come to that unforgettable and thrilling allegory at the close of the sixth book, where beauty and justice, with the whole choir of aesthetic and ethical Ideas, are carried up to the supreme Idea of the Good, into which they converge and from which they have their measure of glory, as in the physical realm the light and life of our earth and of her sister planets fall from the shining orb of the sun. Strange tales were current after Plato's death about his attempt to define this mystical entity of Goodness, and one of these tells how in a lecture on the subject he advanced into ever subtler and more abstract arguments, while his audience slipped away until only Aristotle was left. But I think these were the inventions of an age much given to humorous satire. Certainly in the *Republic*, as we have it, Plato is quite clear in his statement that, though we can say what the Good is not—not pleasure, for instance, as most people affirm it to be—yet we cannot define it positively. It is the name we give to that something deeper than the passing desires for what may seem to a man good at the moment, that something which in his heart of hearts a man knows that he wants, which ever retreats before him on the pathway of justice and beauty, and of which he gets a far-off glimpse in moments of satisfied conscience. It is the assurance that this want of the soul is not an illusion but the feeling after a

reality which lies at the heart of the world as it lies in the heart of man. This climax of Plato's doctrine of Ideas quite clearly is no more than a magnificent explication into cosmic philosophy of the autobiographical confession of Socrates reported in the *Phaedo*, where he turns from materialistic studies to seek goodness as the true motive of human acts.

And without a clear sense of this ultimate motive of all our actions there can be no order in our life; otherwise expressed, without the possession of this cosmic Idea of Goodness in the soul, though we may not be able to define that Idea positively, there can be no happiness. That might be taken as self-evident. But Plato, not content with this philosophical assumption, goes back, in the eighth book of the *Republic*, to the practical demonstration, interrupted by books v, vi, vii, and proceeds to confirm the truth of his thesis by a portrayal of the five different types of mankind. At one extreme stands the "aristocrat," he who in all his actions is governed by "the best," the just man as he was described earlier in the dialogue, now raised to the philosopher, in whom justice is not a mere arbitrary balance of the faculties but that inner poise and power of a soul which waits ever obediently upon the Idea of the Good. At the other extreme comes the man in whom the greed of dominion and the lust of pleasure have contended for the throne until the very thought of justice and measure has been driven out and his soul is left the prey of some hideous ravening passion, like a city under the sway of a merciless tyrant. If the aristocrat is in the truer sense a man awake, then the state of the tyrannized soul is like a drunken and debauched dream in which the

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mis-shapen monsters of the imagination are unchained and stalk forth to work unspeakable horrors.

Can anyone ask which of these is the happy man and which the miserable man, or doubt the cause of happiness and misery? And so, at the conclusion of these pictures of life, which have followed one another like little dramas contesting on the stage for a prize, Socrates turns to one of his young hearers as to the appointed judge with the query :

"Need we hire a herald, or shall I announce the decision of Glauco that the aristocrat as the best and justest is also the happiest, and that this is he who is the most royal man and king over himself; and that the worst and most unjust man is also the most miserable, and that this is he who, being the greatest tyrant of himself, is also the greatest tyrant of his State?"

It might seem that the quest which Plato opened in the *Gorgias* and continued in the *Republic* had reached its goal. The quality of justice has not only been defined, but as the Idea of the Good it has been so clothed about with dignity and exalted to so supreme a place in the firmament of being that it might be described in Isaiah's language of Jehovah, as "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." Zeal for the authority of Ideas has for the moment swallowed theology, and the Good has been enthroned above the world not only as the end of all desiring but as the creative source of being and knowing, itself a god or left to reign in a universe that needs no god. To many commentators this practical deification of the pure Idea as sufficient of itself to explain the nature of things as they are and to provide for the happy life, with no need of the theistic inferences of faith, seems the highest point of Plato's philosophy; and so it is, if we think of Plato as aiming finally

to dethrone religion and to set philosophy in its place. But the fact remains—a fact utterly disconcerting to some who would usurp the name of Platonists—that Plato himself, returning to the subject after years of reflection, wrote what bears all the marks of a deliberate modification of his earlier thesis.

Of the intended connection between the *Republic* and its sequel the *Timaeus* there can be no doubt. The prologue to the *Timaeus* announces categorically that the dialogue is to be a continuation of the *Republic*, and this announcement is followed by a summary of the Ideal State of the *Republic*, just as the *Republic* opened with a repetition of the main argument of the *Gorgias*. And then, as if aware that the pursuit of philosophy had led him in the *Republic* to an untenable extravagance, Plato proceeds to expound a view of the doctrine of Ideas in the form of a strange—to the irreligious reader a forever baffling—myth of creation.

I need not spend much time on the allegory of the *Timaeus*, which in its general outline is simple enough. The gist of the matter is set forth at the beginning of the story, and can be conveyed in a brief paraphrase. We are told that nothing can change its status and so come into new being without a cause. Creation is thus a sort of fashioning, like the craft of a sculptor or a painter; and the nature of the fashioned thing will depend on the skill of the fashioner and on the kind of image before his mind's eye which he proposes to embody. Thus it is that from the excellence of this world we believe that it was fashioned by a benevolent artist in imitation of a fair and wonderful pattern. It was God who fashioned it, and the model before him was the immutably

perfect world of Ideas laid up in eternity. God is good, we say, and in the good there can be no residue of envy. And so, being good, and desiring that the product of his will should be good and that, so far as possible, there should be nothing evil, God, the Creator, took all that was available to his hands, took it as it came to him lying not in a state of easily malleable quiescence but in a state of turbulent motion without sense or measure, and out of this disorder moulded it into an ordered likeness of the everlasting harmonies, thinking that order is altogether better than disorder.

Surely we are justified in holding that in this myth of creation there is an intentional modification of the conclusions reached by the author in his enthusiasm for pure philosophy. Instead of the Idea of the Good which in the sixth book of the *Republic* was elevated, or so it appeared, to the honour of being the supreme and solitary and sufficient cause of all, we have now three causes. Adopting the language of Aristotle, we may say that in the *Timaeus* Ideas retain their function as final and formal cause, as the end to be attained and the model to be imitated, but that beside them, as the efficient cause and agent of good in the world, is set the divine artificer, the Demiurge, the God that inhabiteth eternity and whose name is holy. For the third, material cause we have that which lay at the Creator's disposal, the obscure stuff of "unordered motion," the passively receptive yet blindly obstructive matrix of things to be.

One step further Plato was to take in his recantation. It will be remembered that at the beginning of the great philosophical ascent of the *Republic*, which was to end in the glorification of the Idea of Goodness as alone and of itself sufficient for the good and happy

life, we were asked for the sake of the argument to suppose one of three things: that no gods are, or if they are they pay no heed to the doings of mankind, or if they pay heed they may be placated with a few cheap prayers and sacrifices. Plato himself apparently would never have admitted the actual truth of such a supposition, but it is evident that for a while he regarded the existence of the gods as a matter of so little importance in comparison with the doctrine of Ideas as to be negligible. Now in the tenth book of the *Laws*, written we know just before his death, he repeats these three terms of the atheistical hypothesis and repudiates the very suggestion of them as impious and immoral. In the *Timaeus* he was concerned with restoring God to His place beside Ideas as the Agent of creation; in the theological treatise of the *Laws* he is occupied rather with the rôle of Providence in the life of man. God is now not so much the divine Artificer with His eye set upon the eternal forms of the Ideal world, as Executive of the immutable laws of righteousness and holiness, the inexorable Judge under whose sentence the awards of virtue and the penalties of vice are meted out, and under whose chastening guidance all men, if they will obey, may rise to ever better and higher spheres of existence. If the *Timaeus* reads like a correction of the earlier extravagance of philosophy, it is scarcely too strong to regard the tenth book of the *Laws* as an avowed retraction.

IV

THE PLATONIC THEOLOGY

THE *Timaeus* of Plato, as we have seen, implies a revision of the central conclusion of the *Republic*, and the theological treatise embedded in the *Laws* quite expressly repudiates the hypothesis on which that conclusion was based. Such a change of front may seem fairly startling, but a little consideration will show Plato's reasons for taking the new position. The simple fact is that, when put to the test, the absolute form of the Ideal doctrine, so eloquently expounded in the sixth book of the *Republic*, just would not work. Either the doctrine had to be modified or Ideas had to be dropped altogether; and for Plato, if he would be loyal to his own deepest conviction, the only one of the two alternatives open was to modify, or qualify, the doctrine.

It is a well known matter of history that Aristotle attacks the Platonic Ideas repeatedly and virulently; it has not been so clearly noted that his attacks take no apparent account of the doctrine in its later qualified formulation, but are directed against the exaggerated philosophy of the *Republic*, which postulates the Idea of the Good as both the final-formal cause and the efficient cause of all being. In his own way, and with certain reservations, Aristotle accepts the Idea, or something very like the Platonic Idea, as the

form which all things tend naturally to assume and the finality towards which all things move; his real quarrel is with the notion that the Idea possesses in and of itself a power to effect anything. "Above all," he exclaims in the first book of the *Metaphysics*, "one might discuss the question what on earth the Ideas contribute to sensible things, either to those that are eternal or to those that come into being and cease to be. For they are the source neither of movement nor of any change in things [which is the function of an efficient cause]." And a little further on he returns to the charge: Plato would have us believe "that the Ideas are causes both of being and of becoming; yet, even granted that Ideas exist, still the things that partake of them do not come into being unless there is something to originate movement." These Ideas, Aristotle would say, are described by Plato, as substances, as immutable *things*, and even though one admitted their rôle as formal causes there would still be need of some agent, or efficient cause, to bring these static forms down from their inert isolation into this sphere of multiple, mutable phenomena. And that supreme Idea of the Good, riding alone at the apex of your noetic world, like the sun in the visible sky, how, the critic might ask Plato, does it effect the presence of goodness here below? Does an effluence rain down from it as light and warmth radiate from the celestial orb? These questions are fair, are insistent. The curious fact is that Aristotle, who had been a member of the Academy for twenty years and must have known all the ins and outs of Plato's thought, nowhere intimates that Plato himself had already felt the same difficulties and in the period following the *Republic* had faced them squarely. Quite evidently

these were the questions troubling him when, in the *Sophist*, he turned aside from his main argument to define Ideas not as inert bodies but as faculties, powers, *dynameis*, and when, in the *Parmenides*, he points to the many problems raised by the doctrine yet declares that without belief in Ideas the world falls into chaos before the mind and leaves no possibility of philosophy or even of rational discourse.

But Plato's answers in the *Sophist* and *Parmenides* to the problems raised by the Ideal doctrine were given only in passing, so to speak, and do not touch the heart of the matter. At any rate it is certain that in the latest dialogues he went beyond these halfway explanations and modified the thesis of the *Republic* radically by separating the efficient from the formal cause. For the former he now points to a personal God as the Demiurge or deliberative agent of creation. The rôle of formal cause is left to Ideas as the pattern upon which the Creator looks and which He undertakes to imitate in fashioning an ephemeral world of visible phenomena. It must be admitted that there is some ambiguity in this conception of Ideas as the passive model rather than the active force of creation, and that Plato fails, here as elsewhere, to make clear his own radical distinction between the Ideas of things and the Ideas of qualities. Some reading between the lines is still needed to grasp the all-important fact that he was not so much interested in setting up somewhere in eternity a faultless duplicate of this temporal world of ours, as in insisting on the belief, that God, being good, bound Himself in His creative activity to the everlasting unshakable canons of goodness and justice and beauty and righteousness and holiness. So much must be conceded by the most loyal Platonist

to the confusion in the doctrine of Ideas from which Plato never entirely extricated himself. But there is no excuse for missing the sharp distinction he now draws between God as efficient cause and Ideas as passive formal cause. To overlook this is to read Plato blindfold.

It is, I would maintain, easy to see how Plato arrived at this theory of the cooperation, so to speak, of God and Ideas as together the celestial cause of things as they are; but we have still to consider the fact that, expressly in the *Timaeus* and less prominently in the *Laws*, he introduces another cause, not celestial at all, and not so easy to define.

What has brought him to this further reshaping of his philosophy? It will be remembered that the story of creation in the *Timaeus* begins with the statement that God, being good, desired that all things should be good like Himself *so far as this was attainable*, and to this end, *taking the material at His disposal*, fashioned a world in imitation of the Ideal pattern. Now what is the meaning of these qualifications. *so far as attainable* and *at His disposal*? Nothing more is heard of them in the first half of the *Timaeus*, but at the beginning of the second half Plato reverts to them and from them infers the operation of a "dim and difficult" cause vaguely discoverable in the product of creation, limiting and to some extent thwarting the divine energy. The point is this. If the good will of the Demiurge were all, why should the copy of the pattern be imperfect, why should there be these visible elements of disorder and ugliness and destruction and suffering in this sphere of mortality, whence the hateful intrusion? It is the very old and ever young question: *unde malum?* Evidently something is here that

mars the celestial plan. And two of the names given by Plato to that something suggest, I am bold to asseverate, the nearest approach to a solution of this insoluble problem of evil ever devised by the brain of man. The hindering cause is not called matter, though its source may be found in matter; nor is it, in the *Timaeus* at least, regarded as a soul of evil, though, again, its source may be found in the soul. It is, so far as it can be tracked by reason to its lair in primeval darkness, an inherent and utterly irrational principle of disordered, rather un-ordered, motion (*ataktos kinēsis*), displaying itself in the senseless inertia of matter and of life.

And if you persist in your questioning, and ask why there should be this principle of disorder anywhere, Plato's answer will come in a word which is not so much an explanation as the bare name of a fact: Necessity (*anankē*). "For the genesis of this cosmos," he says, "is a mingled birth, a concurrence of necessity and reason; and the beginning was thus: reason [*i.e.* the divine will] got control of necessity by persuading it to bring on most things to their best end as they came into existence; and so and in such manner, by the act of necessity yielding to reasonable persuasion, the universe was composed."

Now I wonder how many readers, when they meet this passage, are struck by this use of the term "necessity" as perhaps the most original and significant of Plato's innovations in the use of philosophical terms. At least this is to be considered: the word, or its equivalent, is quite common to the philosophers who preceded Socrates, but is always and consistently employed in a sense directly contrary to the Platonic. You will find it in Thales and Heracleitus and Parmenides

and Democritus and Philolaus, and I know not how many others ; and on every occurrence it implies that necessity and reason are synonymous as indicating some one principle of orderly development imbedded in the very nature of things. In Empedocles, to be sure, we hear that the daemons who had polluted themselves were thrust down by necessity into this our meadow of calamity ; but we also hear that the world's evolution and involution under Conflict and Love follow each other as everlasting and necessarily recurring events. And again, though Anaxagoras introduces reason as a power working from without upon a chaos of disorder, yet he immediately drops the idea and allows the world to evolve of itself by an inner compulsion of matter. Then suddenly we have this Platonic conception of Necessity, not as an immanent law of development, but as a senseless force of inertia hindering the purpose of reason and slowly, under the spell of God's persuasion, yielding to order. Necessity is thus evicted from its throne as the Lord of creation and transmuted into an obscurely conjectured relic of fatality which obstructs the full liberty of the shaping Spirit. For one brief moment of light. And then, with the Stoic and Epicurean and Neoplatonic retrogression to the pre-Socratic determinism, darkness closes in once more upon human thought.

Such then is the dualism of Plato in his latter years : on the one side God and Ideas, and on the other side this Necessity in the nature of things, which is his name for the incomprehensible fact that has kept men wondering since first they began to observe and question—the fact that somehow this world of harmonious interplay, this cosmos, is built upon a chaos of clashing individual forces. And I think that today, with

our larger acquisitions of science and history, any one who comes to the observation of nature under the spell of the religious inference of faith in a creative purpose will reach a theory of evil not unlike Plato's. At any rate I would ask you to share with me the meditations that came to me one forenoon, not many years ago, when, with the story of the *Timaeus* fresh in memory, I sat looking out upon a scene of gracious decorum in England.

Before me lay the outspread valley of the Severn, divided by lines of hedge and grove into squares of paler green where the corn grew tall, and of golden brown where the new-mown hay was drying in the sun. It made a picture surpassingly calm and sweet and rich; "earth has not anything to show more fair," I said to myself, with better right than had the poet looking over London.

And from the present my mind turned backwards to the long ages, the incalculable years, of preparation through which the land had passed before it was made fit for this fruitful cultivation:—the fiery convulsions that had tossed up the earth into a sea of mountains, the vast sweep of water that by slow attrition had scooped out this broad channel, and then, contracting, had left it a fertile champaign. Earth and air and fire and water had all contributed to the fashioning of an almost perfect home for the sons of men. Yet it was not they who did it, these unwitting and, as it were, reluctant elements; rather, by its own expansive nature and abandoned to its unchecked action, each of these was an agent of destruction or obstruction. Nor were they, each in itself, capable of learning or of changing their character. They are today what they were at the begin-

ning, and at any moment any one of them, if it breaks bounds, may in an hour undo the labour of centuries. Conflagration, deluge, famine, tempest, earthquake, are forever possible and forever threatening.

And then from these inanimate elements of the scene my thoughts turned to the creatures that inhabit it, to the plants that cover the ground with a tapestry of embroidered green, and the animals, from the tiny insect scuttling through the herbs to the bird sailing on the thin ocean of the air and the ox grazing stolidly in the field. To the eye it was a wide-spread theatre of joy and a masque of peaceful beauty. Until I thought of what lay beneath the surface. Here in fact was an army of countless individuals, each driven on by an instinctive lust of life as if engaged in a vast internecine warfare,—each blade of grass fighting for its place under the sun and obtaining it by the suppression of some other plant, each animal preying for sustenance upon some other form of life. It is a system of ruthless competition and remorseless extermination. How then out of this weltering conflict has this compromise of organic society been contrived, this ordered polity, in which a sort of balance has been struck, such that the individual strivings for existence become mutually supporting as well as mutually destructive? It was not the common principle of life that effected this harmony, for the law of survival is now as always a callous selfishness which teaches the stronger not only to profit by his victory but to take pleasure in the agony of the defeated. Who has not seen a cat toying gleefully with its victim, or a snake gliding exultantly through the grass with a tortured bird in its mouth, and has not shuddered at the gleam of malice in the hunter's eye? Who that has seen a

hawk dropping upon its prey, or heard the baying of hounds on the chase, but has wondered at the mingled beauty and hatefulness of life? From every spot of earth rises continually the battle cry of nature: *vae victis!*

It was from reflections such as these, which came to me one day on the hillside above the broad valley of the Severn, and which may come to any one who looks below the surface spectacle of the world,—it is so that I learned for myself why Plato, midway in his allegory of creation, added a lower cause to the upper cause of God and Ideas. Something in this mingled sphere of genesis is present besides the artistry of God, something that unmistakably mars the imitation of the perfect pattern. And that *tertium quid* seems not to be a spirit of evil, as the Persians and Manichaeans thought of it, who consciously and deliberately strives in opposition to the divine Artificer. These mechanical forces which are held in leash yet are forever threatening confusion and disaster, and these vital forces which prey one upon the other for existence, have no volition of their own, no purpose of evil, directed against the organized comity of the whole. It is simply that individually they are devoid of purpose for the whole. Each of them is merely itself, and of itself obeys its own compelling instinct, and by the bare inertia of its nature clashes with others. The necessary consequence, so far as they are not checked by a power not themselves, in the inanimate realm is chaos, and in the animate realm that ruthlessness which, interpreted by the conscience of the human observer, appears to be malignant cruelty. And this law of blind persistence or expansion, this fatality in the nature of things, I take to be precisely

what Plato meant to signify by that substratum of disorderly, or unordered, motion out of which God by the persuasion of reason wrought an ordered cosmos. It was just this dualism of the higher and the lower cause that the rather mechanical division of Ideas and things in the *Republic* failed to indicate, and one can see from hints in the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*, anticipating the attacks of Aristotle, how Plato was led to revise the earlier scheme.

But where is the place of man, and what in the cosmos corresponds to the innate sense of moral responsibility and judgement which sets him apart from the rest of creation? What in the sum of things responds to the cry of conscience for a spiritual peace that resembles the pacification of nature yet demands more than nature can give? I believe the most urgent motive behind Plato's change of position was the failure of the Idea of justice, or the Good, conceived as in itself and of itself a sufficient cause of happiness,—the failure of the very proposition, that is to say, which he set himself to demonstrate, and asserts to be demonstrated, in the *Republic*.

Now Aristotle nowhere deals with the details of this demonstration, but there is a passage in his *Ethics* (1153b) where he disposes quite summarily of the hypothesis from which Plato argues: "Those who say that the victim on the rack [*trochizomenon*, a manifest synonym of Plato's *streblōsetai*] or the man who falls into great misfortunes is happy if he is good, are, whether they so intend or not, talking nonsense." And Aristotle is right. Not only does the common sense of mankind cry out against Plato's hypothesis, but the very conduct of the argument shows that he was contending for an impossible paradox. It is true

that at the end of the skilfully arranged story of the Rake's Progress in the *Republic* Socrates announces in solemn language, as we have seen, the utter happiness of the aristocrat and the utter misery of the tyrant; but if that story be examined this striking fact will appear: not once in the whole course of the argument has Plato faced squarely and honestly the terms laid down in his own hypothesis. So much he does demonstrate, that the evil man cannot under any circumstances be happy, since in the very nature of the case evil as the contrary of self-mastery means the progressive unchaining of the beast until the heart is enslaved to its own tormenting passions; and Plato does show with brilliant success that, under equal circumstances, the good man by the very possession of goodness is happier than the bad man. But he does not prove, nor by any example attempt to prove, that the perfectly good man must of necessity, under all conceivable circumstances, be perfectly happy. The famous picture of the just man tortured on the rack and suffering the extremity of ill repute, with nothing before him but the endurance of agony unto annihilation, silently drops from the scene and plays no part in the actual debate. That omission, when one considers the precise and peremptory conditions of the argument, is a bewildering fact, of which apparently Plato, while composing the *Republic*, was not aware. But it points to a defect somewhere in the conception of goodness and happiness by which, for this one period of his life, he was dominated.

Now happiness is a word of many shades of meaning. We are "happy," so we say, to accept an invitation to tea; we are "happy" over a stroke of fortune, such as success in business; we are "happy" because of a

moral victory over ourselves. And evidently this last usage is close to the philosophical sense that Plato had in mind. But does so restricted a definition really meet the demands of his philosophy? As an ultimate fact of experience, happiness, like all such ultimates, may be indefinable; nevertheless so much we can say, and Plato has actually said: to the philosopher happiness (*eudaimonia*) is a state of mind, that feeling, that condition of the soul, belonging to the man who has gained possession of the final Good, and, conversely, the final Good is just a name for that towards which all our desires are directed and in which they meet together. And, this being so, it is immediately clear that the just man on the rack cannot be said to have his last desire and so to be perfectly happy—does any sane man include torture, mere torture with no outcome, among his wishes? In other words, though the Good may defy analysis, and though the concomitant state of happiness may be equally indefinable, yet the steps leading up to the final experience are not difficult to distinguish: broadly speaking, they are three.

First of all we must know that happiness and pleasure are not synonymous; there is a difference here, even a possible divergence, like that which we noted in the intellectual sphere between the knowledge of intuition and the opinion connected with observation. Happiness is not merely a prolongation of pleasure or a summation of various pleasures, but primarily is a feeling of self-approbation and the result of a good conscience, and must often therefore, as things are, be sought through the endurance of actual pain. To this extent Plato's picture of the suffering just man is sound. It is true that such a man has grasped the

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main factor of happiness—Aristotle would grant this—and may thus conceivably be happier than the unjust man who enjoys all the pleasures of the world. The error is in regarding the philosophic martyr under such conditions as possessing all the factors of happiness; and the nature of what has been omitted grows clear if we compare him with the religious martyr.

Newman at the close of his *Grammar of Assent* brings together a number of stories of the early professors of Christianity who died under the extremity of physical tortures, yet, as it was said of them, “refreshed with the joy of martyrdom.” What is it that enabled these martyrs to meet the rack, the stake, the cauldron of burning oil, the fury of wild beasts, the hatred of wilder men, with shining countenance,—what is it they possessed that makes their refreshment of joy a simple fact of history, whereas the happiness of Plato’s suffering just man remains a beautiful but unconvincing theorem of philosophy? It is absurd to speak of the mere philosopher as joyous in martyrdom; yet we can believe that the early Christians, slaves and children, delicate women, feeble invalids, smiled at the agony of the arena. “May those beasts,” writes Ignatius on his way to Rome and death, “be my gain. I will provoke and coax them to devour me quickly, and not to be afraid of me, as they are of some whom they will not touch. Should they be unwilling, I will compel them. Bear with me; I know what is my gain.” Courage we may grant to the philosophic victim of persecution, conscious only of his inner rectitude, strength we allow him to endure without flinching; but this eagerness to suffer, this radiant contempt of pain, where should he get them? What is it then that the martyr of religion, and not the Christian alone,

possessed? This one thing that philosophy in its moment of pride thought to dispense with, this one thing: the hope of immortality and the faith in God—the hope of an after life wherein justice shall be not a name but a fact, the faith in a living Judge who shall make justice to prevail in the end; and this hope and this faith are one. It is a simple truth of psychology that hope of something beyond may so kindle the imagination as to render a man insensible to present pains of the flesh; and this ultimate test I doubt if a philosophy without the faith of religion has ever met or will ever meet. How should it in a world where the Idea of Justice lures us on, yet betrays us if we follow? For the Idea of Justice means simply this, that somehow in the end happiness and pleasure shall be made to coincide in that state of blessed security which, for lack of a better term, we still call happiness. Plato's hypothesis was, in fact, a contradiction in terms.

The primary ground, then, of happiness is in the conscience of the individual who feels himself in harmony with the Idea of Justice; and without that inner sense of rightness no man can be happy. So far philosophy. But this alone is not sufficient; there is needed also the hope of time, the faith in an efficient cause which shall render the law of justice operative in the world as it is in the forum of conscience. And still something is wanted. Unless happiness is to remain an expectation and never to become a present actuality, hope and faith must come to fulfilment. If the assurance of the martyr is only hope, a faith born of the bare wish to believe, with nothing corresponding to it in truth, if his life after all will cease with his torture, then his joy is no more than a radiant delusion

and a defiance of fact. Indeed if happiness be the fruition of what is ultimately desired, how can the martyr, more than any other man, be regarded as happy in the final sense of the word, though he laugh at pain? Is martyrdom a part of that which he ultimately desires? Nay, though life bring to the man of good conscience not pain and reprobation but health and power and all honour, has it yet anything to offer such that he shall ask for nothing more? All which is as much as to say—what we need no philosopher to teach us—that the full realization of that which every human soul indomitably craves is here and now, in this world, not attainable.

These, then, are the three grades in the ascent towards happiness, or the three ingredients of the complex state called by the name of happiness: (1) the potentiality thereof, which is the province of ethics and which the suffering just man might possess, (2) the hope thereof, which is the gift of religion and which the martyr of faith may have, and (3) the actuality thereof, which, unless faith be a mockery, is reserved for the future. Potentiality and hope are within the compass of man's will, the actuality depends on other powers.¹

There has been much debate among philosophers whether we should aim at happiness as our conscious goal, or should make duty the law of conduct and let happiness follow as and if it will. And Kant went so far in forcing this antinomy as to declare that any

¹ I have analysed the causes of happiness as concerning individual conduct alone. But there are other aspects of the subject that should be considered if the analysis aimed at completeness. For one thing, in religion the hope of the individual cannot be severed from hope for those embraced in the circle of love.

good act performed for the sake of happiness was simply immoral. I think no such paradox would have arisen if, with the radical difference in mind between the satisfaction of conscience and the sensation of pleasure, it were remembered also that not happiness but the potentiality of happiness should be the immediate aim of conduct. He who eliminates happiness from his code of morals will turn duty into a despot so cruel as to justify rebellion; he who demands the actuality of happiness here and now is doomed to the anguish of disappointment. Surely this was the message of Christ: "In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." Towards such a belief Plato, I hold, was reaching out when, in those latest of his dialogues which might be called a kind of *Praeparatio Evangelica*, he openly retracted the hypothesis of the *Republic* and restored the judgements of God in another world to their place as executors of the law of righteousness and as the everlasting keepers of happiness.

But if I speak of retraction—and the word is not too strong—I do not mean that anything essentially and separately new was introduced into the latest phase of Plato's thought. Not only do the earliest dialogues contain hints of the dualism of God and Ideas over against Necessity later to be elaborated in the *Timaeus* and *Laws*, but something very like the same dualism can be picked out of the *Republic* itself, as it were drawn in circles all about the central thesis of monistic Idealism. Not to mention the religious training of the guardians of the State and the theology of the second book, even a cursory reader of the dialogue must have been disconcerted by the abrupt transition in the middle of the tenth book, where

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Socrates suddenly demands back what he had hypothetically surrendered:

"We have fulfilled the conditions of the argument," he says, "we have not introduced the rewards and good repute of justice, which, as you were saying, are to be found in Homer and Hesiod; but justice in her own nature has been shown to be best for the soul in her own nature"

"And now, Glauco, there will be no harm in further enumerating how many and how great are the rewards which justice and the other virtues procure to the soul from gods and men, both in life and after death."

Very neatly put; but the troubling fact remains that this concession of immortality would be superfluous if the conditions of the argument had really been fulfilled, and indeed the notion of future rewards as a compensation for the injustices of earthly life stands in flat contradiction with the thesis that the possession of justice in the soul is sufficient for happiness under all circumstances. What has happened? How does it come about that, in what is perhaps the most famous of all works of philosophy, we are brought up by this deep-rooted inconsistency? The explanation will be found, I think, by going back to one of the earliest, if not the very first, of Plato's dialogues for our starting point.

In the *Euthyphro* we are introduced to Socrates debating with a young man who, in his passion for holiness, is about to enter upon a course of action shocking to the ordinary moral prejudices of mankind. And so the discussion revolves about the problem: what is holiness? The solution, after the manner of the so-called aporetic dialogues, is rather left to the intelligence of the reader than clearly stated, but it can be discovered easily enough from hints thrown out

here and there, and may be summed up in a series of propositions :

- (1) Holiness is service and imitation of the Gods.
- (2) Certain acts are beloved of the Gods because they are in themselves just and good; they are not just and good because they are beloved of the gods.
- (3) Our manner of imitating the gods, then, should be by performing such acts as are just and good, for the reason that they *are* just and good.
- (4) To do this unerringly we must not only have the right intention but we must know what justice in itself ultimately is and what goodness in itself ultimately is.
- (5) Nevertheless, though belief in the existence of pure justice and pure goodness is the only certain incentive to right conduct, such is our frailty that their natures cannot be known to us directly as they are known to the gods.
- (6) Therefore both the infidel, who denies the existence of absolute justice and absolute goodness, and the bigot, who claims exact knowledge of absolute justice and absolute goodness, are abhorrent to the gods.

Such is the implied thesis of the *Euthyphro*, and so analysed it might be called the practical paradox of ethics. We are born into this world knowing nothing, or at best having only a confused notion of right and wrong, and from that beginning, with much striving, through many errors, we learn but a little; yet all the while we are bound under fixed laws which hearken to no plea of ignorance and mete out their awards and penalties with calm inflexibility. In this maze of ethics the self-approval of conscience is the monitor we are bound to obey, yet always in a docile spirit, knowing that the self is terribly subject to the delusions of flattery. If Plato's account of our state be correct—and all purely human experience cries out that it is so—then the sum of wisdom comes to this: *Man is intellectually impotent and morally responsible.*

Intellectual impotence and moral responsibility. We cannot remotely comprehend why this should be, and no man, nor any god, I think, who had utter freedom of choosing, would place the creatures of his pleasure under such an obligation; nevertheless so the law of the world runs. Does it point to some corresponding inevitability in the nature of things to which creature and Creator alike are bound, some Necessity far off, obscure, remote from reason, hidden in the final darkness of infinity? Intellectual impotence and moral responsibility. It is because Sophocles made this the theme of his *Oedipus* that the play reads not as the story of a particular Theban king, but as the tragedy of all mankind. And it is because Plato began with this paradox, lavished upon it all the resources of a great mind and a greater imagination, and in the end, having discovered no escape from its tyranny, wrought it into a superb allegory of cosmic teleology,—it is for this reason that his dialogues are treasured as a record of the wisdom of human experience, not merely admired as the clever speculations of a school or an age. But between the *Euthyphro* and the *Laws* there is a long history.

The whole discussion of the *Euthyphro* revolves quite manifestly in what we have described as the field of intuition. But in that field there are two phases, or processes of the mind. The common ground is the fact that we have certain data, *donnés*, facts, not inferred or conjectured but given: the sense of a fundamental difference between right and wrong and the feeling of responsibility in choosing between them. In the *Euthyphro* these enter as justice itself and holiness itself, and from them runs the line of philosophy, which in Plato will develop into the doctrine

of Ideas. That is one process of the mind. But beside this rudimentary philosophy there is also in the *Euthyphro* much talk about the judging gods, or a judging God, who is not, like Ideas, a logical deduction from the facts of intuition, but is rather an object of faith, an inference from the facts drawn under the impulse of a wish to believe. From this belief runs the line of religion, ending in a theistic allegory of creation and judgement.

Now in the *Euthyphro* the lines of philosophy and religion intercross each other in such wise that they can scarcely be disentangled. But in the group of four dialogues I have singled out from the whole body of Plato's writing it can be seen how the two lines separate and at first even diverge one from the other. The *Gorgias* lays all the emphasis on the effects of justice and righteousness, while religion is rather dragged in at the end as a legend of future judgement which bears no clear relation to the main argument. Then in the *Republic* philosophy becomes coterminous with the doctrine of Ideas, and at the climax of the dialogue the Idea of Goodness is so exalted as for the moment to leave no need for a personal creator and judge. That may appear to be the very highest reach, the acme, of intuition; only you will note that it takes no account of the sense of purpose, which is the supreme factor of conscience; or at least it finds nothing in the universe corresponding to the intuition of purpose in the individual soul; there is no place for teleology any more than for theism in a world created and dominated by the impersonal law of Goodness. At the same time other parts of the dialogue seem to allow to religion all its normal claims. Indeed in one passage, at the opening of the tenth book, where God

is made not the executive but the creator of Ideas, theism in turn is so exalted that there might appear to be no independent room left for philosophy. However we may attempt to explain these inconsistencies of the *Republic*, the upshot of the whole dialogue is that philosophy and religion have for a time so diverged in Plato's mind as to be not only unrelated but practically exclusive one of the other. And then at the last the two lines come together again, not now by a confusion of distinctions as in the *Euthyphro*, but as parallel one with the other and mutually confirmatory. And this is how, after many vicissitudes, the association of philosophy and religion with which Plato started out reappears in the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*.

We are told that the immortal souls of men, at the beginning of the ages, lived for a period on their own particular stars, and there, like the souls of the *Phaedrus* who from their chariots beheld the super-celestial procession of Ideas, were initiated by God into the eternal mysteries of being. Then, by a fatal necessity for which no reason can be given, each is wedded with a soul of mortality, "having in itself dreadful and compelling passions—pleasure first, the greatest incitement to evil, the pains that frighten away good, and besides these confidence and fear, witless counsellors both, and wrath hard to appease, and alluring hope." Into such wedlock the immortal soul is born upon this earthly planet of ours, and so begins its long succession of incarnate lives. Its prosperity depends upon its willingness and power to impose balance and measure upon those unruly members, the "necessary passions," with which it is yoked. In that conflict its only guide is the remembrance, dim it may

be but never utterly extinguished, of its starry initiation long ago into the eternal canons of righteousness; and its only help is the watchful providence of God, who causes it to be born, for each new life, in such a place and under such circumstances as it merits and as will best contribute to its moral progress. To that end the universe was created as a school of discipline and enlightenment for the spirit. And so at the very last, if a man be wise to learn, the heritage of memory may grow into knowledge, the unruly passions into servants of peace, and the immortal soul will be restored by God to its native star, where happiness no longer waits upon hope and faith but spreads out as a present and everlasting possession. Until that blessed consummation humility is the virtue of men and their safeguard—to accept loyally the hard necessity of intellectual impotence and moral responsibility, to walk humbly with God, never doubting, whatever befall, that His vision is clear, His will beneficent, His purpose sure, and His hand strong to lead into knowledge those who live by faith. The conclusion of Plato's philosophy is akin to the Jewish theology, and there is a kernel of truth in the old saying: Either this is Plato talking Moses or Moses talking Plato.

We may seem to have come a long way from the simple guesses of the *Euthyphro*, but in fact we have here only a larger expression of what was there implicit. Religion as inculcated in the early dialogue meant that, so far as our knowledge availed, we should imitate the gods by aiming at righteousness. That too was the lesson of the notable passage in the *Theaetetus* on the "becoming like to God." And now in the allegory of the *Timaeus* we see clearly what was implied by the duty of imitation. The "necessary pas-

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sions," which constitute, we know not why or how, the substance of our mortal soul, are in our microcosm exactly the counterpart of the substratum of the "unordered motion," the Necessity, in the large world of creation. Man's task, his privilege it were better to say, is to bring measure and harmony into this mental turmoil just as the Demiurge imposes beauty and comity upon the chaos of inanimate and vital forces. And this we must do by following whatever fleeting glimpses may come to us of the immutable canons of righteousness, even as the Lord of creation works with His eye upon the eternal pattern.

So it was that Plato, following the hint of Socrates' rejection of the fatalistic theories of his predecessors for the liberty of intuition, wrought together the new philosophy of Ideas and the ageless tradition of religion into a splendid allegory of cosmic teleology.²

² See Appendix B.

V

ILLUSIONS OF REASON

OUR study of teleology took its beginning in a passage of the *Phaedo* reporting the reflections of Socrates on the reason for his remaining in gaol. And it will be remembered that his conclusion was a dissatisfaction with the theories of deterministic evolution derived by his forerunners from the observation of nature, and a belief that the true explanation of the world's order must be sought rather in a cause corresponding to what the soul knows of its own motives for action. And we have seen how the development of this suggestion was the life-work of Socrates' great disciple.

Here I would call attention again to the fact that Plato travelled to his goal by two paths, the way of philosophy and the way of religion, the one leading to the doctrine of Ideas and the other to theism. And it is important further to remember that Plato's theism did not follow by logical explication of his doctrine of Ideas, but was a product of faith antecedent to his philosophy, and had its root in the primitive religious instinct of the race, though purified and amplified and rendered more reasonable by adoption into his philosophy.

I am not asserting that Plato himself was clearly aware of the distinction between the two paths he

had trodden; indeed he has no word in his vocabulary for "faith." Nor am I overlooking the fact that he fails at times to keep the brotherhood of philosophy and religion clear of entanglements with rationalism. You will catch him more than once arguing for the immortality of the soul from such physical theories as the conservation of matter and energy, and trying to demonstrate the existence of God from the observed transmission of motion through one moved and moving object back to a supposed self-moving Mover. Of such arguments we can only say that, so far as they prove anything, they lead to a conception of the continuity of soul in the abstract rather than to the survival of any individual soul, and to an ultimate principle of causation, like Spinoza's *Deus omnium rerum causa immanens . . . non libera sed tantum necessaria*, which is the very opposite of the God of the *Euthyphro* and the *Timaeus*. To this extent these excursions into rationalism tend rather to obscure than to confirm the inference of faith from intuition. But on the whole they are secondary to Plato's true philosophy; the wonder is that they should cause so little confusion in the thought of one who first of all and, save for Socrates, out of his own brain plotted the great theme of teleology.

And our wonder at Plato's genius is enhanced when we see how quickly and completely his intuitive philosophy disappeared after his death. I will say nothing of Aristotle, for that is a subject I reserve for treatment at another time; but with the succeeding schools we have a perfectly plain reversion to the observational methods of the pre-Socratic hylozoists, with the resulting thesis of an evolution by the necessity of some inherent law of matter or of spirit, which

leaves no place for Ideas or for a conscious Creator or for cosmic purpose. Certainly a material determinism is the note of the Stoics, however true it be that some of them undertook to smuggle in a kind of half-hearted theism with consequences disastrous to the consistency of their physics; and if the Epicureans differed from the Stoics in setting up pure chance in place of determinism, the difference was only on the surface. By the laws of probability chance as a cause glides imperceptibly into fatality; and the atoms of Epicurus, whirling fortuitously in the infinite inane, are nothing more than Zeno's ever expanding and contracting continuum broken up into bits.

But it is with Neoplatonism that the reversion begins to display all its portentous consequences—the more portentous because so subtly disguised. In Plotinus the First Cause is not, as with Stoic and Epicurean, immanent in matter and barely, if at all, distinguishable from matter, but is raised into dizzy transcendence and tricked out with the dignities of immaterial Spirit. So like a God is it that for a while it deceived even a St. Augustine. But regard it more closely—this Absolute One, this Superessential Essence, this Final Abstraction, this Quiescent Energy, from which the cosmic spheres drop down, so to speak, by the overflowing fullness of its perfection, layer upon layer to the vast sustaining bosom of Nothingness. There is no Idea before its unseeing eyes, no reflection in its unknowing brain, no responsibility in its unsolicited conscience, no purpose in its stationary will, in its unthrobbing heart no care for the bantlings of its superperfection dropped into the circumambient void. It has no eyes, no brain, no con-

science, no will, no heart ; it is called God, but that is a derision of human speech. It is not the projection of man's conscious self lifted into the sublime of purposive goodness, but a phantom evoked by reason out of the externalities of observation, stripped layer by layer of concrete reality until nothing remains but a naked nucleus of mechanical Necessity which, in the awful abyss where all distinctions vanish, may pass for liberty.

Why should this have happened? Why is it that the Platonic dualism—without which there can be no teleology—stands out in such lonely, if splendid, isolation, as it were a strong citadel or strategic hill captured by the spirit in the great battle of truth, held for a moment, and then overswept by the hostile forces fighting under the banner of so-called Reason? The explanation, I believe, is to be found in the simple and obvious fact that the monistic theories derived ultimately from observation not only have behind them the urgency of the physical senses, but provide a neat tidy sort of world in which the mind seems able to evade the insoluble paradoxes of experience. If all things flow from a single principle with the purring regularity of a machine, then, with this first cause before me, I can fit everything that happens into a series of syllogisms with no need of examining my successive premisses. On the other hand, if from the data of intuition I infer a transcendent dualism of God and Ideas operating upon the disorder of Necessity, then there is always in the world an incalculable residue of unreason to take into account. I cannot by a bare process of logic pretend to explain what is or predict what will be, but must hold the mind always open to the accession of fresh facts and new com-

binations. I must abide forever in a state of mental docility, with my lesson never fully learned. In such a world the sceptic and the Platonist and the Christian are equally at ease, but the rationalist is an outcast; and against such a state of pupilage the intellect rebels with the pride of a Satan.

The result of all this is a curious anomaly of language: we have a self-styled rationalistic philosophy opposed to an anti-rationalist philosophy, yet "anti-rationalism," as basing its inference on the intimately known facts of consciousness and as controlled by the whole gamut of experience, is really more reasonable than "rationalism." That, as I understand it, is what Pascal meant when he said: *il n'y a rien si conforme à la raison que ce désaveu de la raison.*

Now there is no need, even were there time, to weigh the long succession of frankly materialistic theories, sporting the authority of science, that have followed the lead of the Stoic and Epicurean guesses at the *rerum natura*. As for genuine science the issue between it and religion is open and above-board, and indeed there is no reason why the twain should not live in mutual toleration. Science in its own field may pursue its honourable and helpful course, while leaving religion to develop on its own line. But science rigged out in the robes and tiara of an infallible dictator and presuming to emit encyclical on the meaning of life, whatever it may have been in the past, is now like the Giant that Bunyan's hero saw at the end of the valley; "though he be yet alive he is by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can do little more than sit in the cave's mouth grinning at pilgrims as they go

by, and biting his nails, because he cannot come at them." Since the downfall of the mid-Victorian tyranny of undisguised materialism a serious encroachment from that side is not likely to disturb the peace. Certainly the afterclap of that orgy of illicit science, the thing called behaviourism in this country, is no better than a lifeless bogey dressed up to frighten college boys and to delight illiterate psychologists.

But the philosophy that derives from Neoplatonism and that throws dust in our eyes by talking as though its metaphysical idealism had any connection with Plato's doctrine of Ideas, and as though its Absolutes had any kinship with the God of religion,—this does confuse the issue in a manner to deceive the elect, and cannot be passed by in our study of teleology. For the outstanding forms of this delusion we may take the revered names of Spinoza and Kant, one of whom reaches his substitute for faith by what he regards as the indisputable conclusions of reason from the data of observation, while the other reasons ostensibly from the data of intuition. Between them they thus cover pretty well the possibilities of quasi-religious rationalism.

Now, as I read the *Ethics* of Spinoza, the argument may be summed up under four heads :

- (1) The motive behind his metaphysical inquiry, the goal he has in view, is religious.
- (2) The axiom from which he sets out to reach this goal pretends to be drawn from the facts of observation, but is really a bare abstract theorem of reason.
- (3) The effort to connect this abstraction of logic with the concrete facts of existence involves him in illogical contradictions.
- (4) The conclusion at which he arrives, though enounced in the language of religion, is utterly incongruous with the religious goal he proposed to himself.

(1) No one can read the works and letters of Spinoza without being impressed by the depth and sincerity of his religious conviction or without seeing that his whole philosophy is a search for the peace of God which is not of this world. His treatise on the *Emendation of the Intellect* begins with a confession of the vanity and futility of all earthly goods which hitherto he had desired, and with a statement of his determination to look for that true and communicable Good which, being found and acquired, will lead to the eternity of perfect joy. And that Good is nothing less than God. "For this," he declares in the *Tractatus*, "is involved in the very idea of God, that God is our *summum bonum*, and that the knowledge and love of God is the ultimate end to which all our actions should be directed." The words are little more than a paraphrase of St. Augustine's famous sentence, *Inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*; and to this goal of divine rest the whole argument of the *Ethics* is pointed. It is not without reason that Spinoza has been called "the God-intoxicated," and that he is reckoned among the saints of philosophy.

(2) But if the goal of Spinoza is religious, his chosen way thereto is profoundly and radically irreligious. And there lies the ambush of defeat. He will not be content to start with the first faint glimmering of spiritual light, and to follow its guidance, if perchance it may lead step by step to ever clearer knowledge and deeper love; at once he must *know*, must know in such wise that the object of knowledge shall be identical with the knowing of it, a something defined in the strictest terms of logic, tucked comfortably into a pure theorem of reason, with no frayed edges of conjecture or inference, with no penumbra

about it of half-knowledge wherein the imagination may set up its dance of indecent shadows. To this end his theology will purge itself utterly, at a bound, of every taint of anthropomorphism; he will sweep clean. Our human distinctions of good and evil are mere prejudices; we think ourselves free because we hug the delusions of consciousness rather than look at external facts; we imagine a purpose where there is only fatality. And so, if we are deceived about ourselves, how doubly are we deceived when we transfer these anthropomorphic illusions to God. To Spinoza a God, the only God commensurate with a syllogism, can have nothing to do with any ultimate distinctions of right and wrong, can be endowed with nothing corresponding to our supposed human liberty, and above all cannot act for a purpose—above all, for our saint of philosophy fairly grinds his teeth at the bare mention of a cosmic teleology as “doing away with God’s perfection.” Having thus rejected the very method of faith, with its inference of a Being transcendent yet analogous to our human intuition of conscience, he will turn to the observation of nature for his formula. There he sees a number of things of each of which we say that it is: hence he will abstract the notion of pure Being, not a being which is what it is, but just *Is*; seeing a cause why each thing acts as it acts, he will abstract the notion of pure causality, not a cause of these different actions, but the necessity that being can be only being; seeing that each thing is a unit amidst other units, he will abstract the notion of pure Unity, not the one supreme thing above all others, but the identity of being with itself as a predicate without any subject or, if you prefer, a subject without any predicate. Hence a God who can be

handed about in a single word as absolute Being or Causality or Unity, all of which terms are interchangeable since they are equally without content, and no one of which implies any brute facts to account for.

(3) A more neatly expurgated Deity could not be devised for the comfort of human reason. It defies the atheist, for who shall be bold enough to question the being of Being—if only such a Being could be cured of the prestidigitator's trick of suddenly disappearing and as suddenly reappearing as Not-Being. Indeed the more honest of the metaphysical idealists and their still more honest cousins, the mystics, have not shrunk from this confluence of the *via positiva* and the *via negativa* in the capacious ocean of the Absolute. It was of them that a witty President of Princeton University used to say: "When you take from anything that which makes it something, what you have left is nothing."

Nor could the human brain demand a more tightly formulated idea of God as an axiom from which the whole universe shall be unfolded in a series of logical propositions, just as the properties of a triangle, to use Spinoza's favourite illustration, flow from its definition. The only difficulty is that this world of our actual experience has properties quite different from those of a triangle and refuses to be netted in a mathematical formula. And so the central part of Spinoza's *Ethics* strives desperately to deal logically with a perfectly illogical and arbitrary hypothesis. That absolute Being from which all being things are to be taken out, like rabbits from a magician's hat, is at once the negation of all attributes and the affirmation of all attributes. Now that sounds a bit paradoxical; but not, the metaphysician will say, if you approach it in the right

spirit. He will tell you that absolute Being is "a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence." You see how deftly the paradox is resolved; if your Absolute includes an infinite number of attributes, it will be all-inclusive, and, if each of these attributes is infinite no one of them will imply anything finite and the sum of them is all-exclusive of limitations. To be sure only two of this infinite number of attributes are known to the human brain, viz. space and thought; but neither of these need bother you. The attribute of infinite space is perfectly innocuous, since it has nothing in it, no material bodies, no forms, no limitations of any sort; and infinite thought is equally harmless, since it is not a mind thinking about something nor a something about which a mind is thinking, but just thought without any limiting content. No one can accuse you of inconsistency in attributing to your Absolute infinite attributes that attribute nothing. If only the world would submit to your logic! If only you could burke the question of actual experience! What are you going to do with these horrid material bodies that appear to move about in space and with these finite thoughts that seem to be jostling about in our brains? Enter the convenient devil of the imagination. These bodies do not really exist, we only imagine them; we are not really thinking about anything concrete, we only imagine we are doing so. But you must not ask how this cunning serpent of the imagination crept into the Paradise of pure Reason; or, if you do ask, you will get no answer.

(4) Religion, then, is the death of the imagination and the life of pure reason. And when this process of conversion is complete, and you have learned to see

things *sub specie aeternitatis*, that is to look through them and to see that they really are not there, then you are prepared for eternal bliss in the "intellectual love of God." It is a wonderful phrase, that *amor intellectualis Dei*, and no one will deny to Spinoza the gift of neat expression; but I fear that the legitimate appeal of this particular phrase is rather to the sinful faculty of the imagination than to the virtuous power of pure reason. It springs from the religious fervour which impelled Spinoza to his rigid course of philosophizing. But what, when filtered through the network of syllogisms, has this God become that we should love Him? His attributes are empty space and vacant thought; and shall these kindle my affection? He is something like a triangle; and shall I be exhorted to take such a figure to my heart? I can comprehend the intellectual zest of a mathematician over his abstractions, but to confound such an interest with adoration of the Divine is no better than a solecism of speech. And that is not all. In the bosom of the Absolute, so we learn, "the love of God to man and the intellectual love of man to God are one and the same thing," since they both come to this, that "God loves Himself with an infinite intellectual love." Could anything be chillier than the passion of a triangular Deity for His own triangularity? But I do not wish to treat a revered name with levity, and I remember in time the lines in which one of the poets of the *Anti-Jacobin*, satirizing Erasmus Darwin's *Loves of the Plants*, warns the profane against intruding into the even more mystic *Loves of the Triangles*:

Stay your rude steps, or e'er your feet invade
The Muses' haunts, ye sons of war and trade!

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To you no Postulates prefer their claim,
No ardent Axioms your dull souls inflame;
For you no Tangents touch, no Angles meet,
No Circles join in osculation sweet!

Into such bathos can minds like that of Spinoza be precipitated, "overthrown," as Hume was to say, "by the greatness of their own genius." It was a later and lesser, though more hard-headed, idealist, F. H. Bradley, who gave this desperate apology for the euthanasia of religion in rationalism: "Short of the Absolute, God cannot rest, and having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with him." A true saying of Bradley's, except for the minor fault of identifying himself as an Oxford don with Deity. He might have said more modestly: Short of the Absolute I cannot rest, and, having reached that goal, I am lost and religion with me.

Evidently something is sadly amiss in the method which searches for the peace of God along a path ending in such a caricature of religion. I believe the error can be traced back to the initial disregard of the prime lesson of experience, that we are intellectually impotent and morally responsible. In the case of Spinoza it is quite clear that he not only disregards but actually reverses these terms. Instead he will insist on intellectual responsibility and moral impotence. From the intuition of conscience we can draw no inference whatsoever; our only responsibility is to follow the headlong flight of reason which, leaping from the ground of physical observation, soars into the empyrean where all discriminations of good and evil vanish in the Infinite Indifference.

Against this attempt to manufacture a religion out of pure logic arose the doughtiest of agnostics, David

Hume, who will be sceptical and rationalistic in one and the same breath, and who leaves us in the end with the intellect and the moral sense both impotent. As a rationalist he will suppose that the only way of getting at the postulates of religion is by the trail beaten out by Spinoza and the deists ; as a sceptic he perceives, with a clarity which places him just below the greatest of philosophers, that reason so left to its own devices, the *intellectus sibi permissus*, as Bacon had termed it, ends in intellectual nihilism. As a sceptic he acknowledges that the fact of conscience cannot be reasoned out of existence ; as rationalist he refuses any authority to the moral sense, because from the feeling of responsibility, as he contends, it cannot be logically demonstrated that there is anything to which we are responsible. Hence conscience is left to flounder in a kind of impotent compliance with the whims of custom. It would be interesting and much to our purpose to trace the steps by which Hume arrived at this position of half-sceptical agnosticism at once anti-religious and anti-metaphysical, but time forbids. We must pass on to the other great metaphysician of religion and see how from a different beginning he ends in a reversal of the sceptic's maxim of faith quite as did Spinoza.

It is well known that the aim of Kant was to find an escape from the double-barrelled agnosticism of Hume, and to establish religion on a thoroughly critical basis. He will make his start, not from the observation of nature as did Spinoza and the deists whom Hume had annihilated, but from the intuitive moral sense, to which his sceptical predecessor had given lip-assent, and barely that. The foundation at least is sound, the beginning full of promise, and to many

the superstructure has seemed to be the nearest approach of human wisdom to finality. The situation, it will be observed, was not unlike that which confronted Socrates when the naturalistic philosophy of his predecessors had ended in the sceptical victory of the sophists, and Kant's return to the intuitive moral sense recalls the great appeal of Socrates reported in the *Phaedo*. And more than that, it would be possible to put together a series of passages from Kant's works which would have the appearance of a teleology curiously similar to that of Plato's later years, with the advantage of an analytic thoroughness beyond the reach of the Grecian. As thus: with the universal sense of right and wrong, self-approval and self-condemnation, Kant sees that we have the immediate cognizance of an objective moral law, which might be regarded as the critical equivalent of the Platonic Ideas; with intuition of the moral law we have given a sense of responsibility, and with the sense of responsibility we have knowledge of spiritual freedom and ethical purpose.

So far we have a position not unlike that of Plato in the *Republic*, though with a fuller analysis of the factors of ethical teleology. And here Kant did not fall into the philosopher's trap of supposing that the just man, by reason of his justice and that alone, is always, presently, under all circumstances happy. He saw, as Plato also was to see in his later years, that righteousness and happiness are not necessarily coincident in this world, and so argued that the motive of moral actions must rise above the desire of immediate, present happiness. Nevertheless happiness is universally desired and must be embraced in a definition of the final good. "Virtue and happiness together,"

he says, "constitute the possession of the *summum bonum* in a person, and the distribution of happiness in exact proportion to morality . . . constitutes the *summum bonum* of a possible world." Therefore, since righteousness and happiness do not necessarily fall together in this life, we are left to this alternative: either obedience to the moral law will not bestow that which all men desire and life is an irrational mockery, or else a new factor must be introduced into the ethical scheme of things besides the moral law and the individual will. And so we see Kant taking the path to which Plato had been forced to return. Like Plato he postulates the immortality of the soul in order that in the everlasting duration of time it may pass from its present sinful state to a condition of holiness wherein the will may become completely harmonious with the moral law; and further he postulates the existence of a God who shall conjoin virtue and happiness as friendly concomitants, if not as cause and effect.

All this may be pieced together from Kant's works and has the ring of Platonism; but it is not the real Kant, and to take it as such would be to read him in the spirit of his servant Lampe, for whom, according to the well known witticism of Heine, Kant showed himself to be not merely a mighty metaphysician but a good man. "The old Lampe must have a God, or the poor fellow cannot be happy; but man should be happy in the world as the Practical Reason tells. So shall the Practical Reason guaranty the existence of God." That may sound like a lampoon of the relation between the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*; but it is true to this extent that Kant did restate his sceptical position in such wise

that the simple Lampe—and that is you, my dear listener, and I—may still find all the naïve words of ethics and religion needed for consolation in a troubled world, while the enlightened student may know that they are only verbal concessions to the metaphysically incompetent—including Plato.

Kant's own method of stating the difference is, of course, not so simple. "We may call all philosophy *empirical*," he says, "so far as it is based on grounds of experience: on the other hand that which delivers its doctrines from *a priori* principles alone we may call pure philosophy. When the latter is merely formal, it is logic; if it is restricted to definite objects of the understanding it is *metaphysic*. In this way there arises the idea of a twofold metaphysic—a *metaphysic of nature* and a *metaphysic of morals*."¹ Now Lampe is the ignorant empirical philosopher, to whom words have no meaning unless they convey something known to him by experience, and however far he may progress on the path of morality and whatever his faith may tell him of immortality and of a good God, all these ideas will retain the tincture of anthropomorphism with which they were imbued at their source. But for the metaphysician in the heights whatever is anthropomorphic has *ipso facto* no validity, and the basis of morality must be laid in pure practical reason which is utterly removed from the low and humiliating ground of experience (so Kant expressly). All those terms that run through his ethical discourses

¹ *Preface to the Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*. The translation is from T. K. Abbott, *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason, and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*. The figures in parentheses in the following paragraphs refer to the pages of this book.

must be reinterpreted into abstract concepts uncontaminated by any gross meaning.

Hence the sense of right and wrong, to which all ethics must go back, has no relation to any concrete distinction, and is not at all what poor old Lampe supposes it to be. "There is no genuine supreme principle of morality but what must rest simply on pure reason, independent on all experience" (26); in place of the instinctive and universal but very personal and immediate voice of conscience, we must have "a metaphysic of morals, completely isolated, not mixed with any anthropology, theology, physics, or hyperphysics, and still less with occult qualities (which might be called hypophysical)" (27). Further, to the poor fellow like Lampe the morality of an agent depends on his actual freedom to choose between right and wrong as he knows right and wrong. But not so to the metaphysician. The sort of freedom known to conscience is a part of experience and therefore must be an illusion; true freedom is not a fact antecedently given but forces itself on us as a synthetic *a priori* proposition, which is not based on any intuition either pure or empirical (120). All the actions of a man in time are determined; freedom belongs not to you and me as we act in time, but to the abstract idea of man, and is thus purely transcendental with no bearing upon the conduct of daily life (189, 190). And with concrete freedom there disappears the concrete fact of responsibility. To be sure that part of a man of which he is conscious as a sort of abstraction of manhood not subject to time-conditions, has its own laws given to itself by its faculty of pure reason; but such laws are not current in this world of time and space. Kant is quite definite on this point. "As I have deprived the

will," he argues, "of every impulse which could arise to it from obedience to any [particular] law, there remains nothing but the universal conformity of its actions to law in general [that is to a conception of law absolutely devoid of positive content]" (191, 18). Just how the immediate sense of responsibility known to conscience gets transmogrified into universal conformity of timeless volition to a conception of abstract law, that is a puzzle for the metaphysician, not for Lampe—or for me.

It is not strange that Kant in this metaphysic of ethics should retract any concession made to the concrete feeling of happiness. He does indeed concede something like self-approbation as a concomitant of virtue; but it is an abstraction as void of substance as the morality it attends. It rests on no special feeling (214), and is a purely negative satisfaction (215). Whatever such an unfelt feeling may be, this is certain, that morality does not produce happiness, or any part thereof; nor can happiness be regarded as a motive of morality. On the contrary, the man who performs a just act for the sake of happiness is not acting morally at all, but amorally if not immorally. Hence Kant's famous categorical imperative, which declares that certain acts are in themselves obligatory without reference to any consequence. This blank command to act in a certain way for no reason whatsoever is the metaphysical substitute for the guidance of experience. Why a God should be lugged into connection with an ethical law so conceived, or why there should be any patter about immortality, it is hard to explain on any logical grounds. Nevertheless Kant was not a pure dialectical machine, and he was haunted by those great names even as Spinoza was

before him. Still, in his most metaphysical moments, he will slip into his vacant universe a God, like a *deus ex machina*, who is going to make happy in some remote corner of eternity the man who obeys the categorical imperative, despite the fact that virtue and the thought of reward are antagonistic one to the other. It looks as if after all there might be something solid in Kant's concessions to the religious cravings of poor old Lampe—but, in the name of metaphysics, do not presume too much. We do not know that such a God exists (yet the whole aim of Kant is to set up a religion of knowledge in place of the uncertainties of faith), we never can know that such a God exists; we just "postulate," in common parlance "pretend," the existence of God as an abstraction without which our other abstractions seem to be getting out of hand. God and immortality are mere names, empty vocables for the possibility of the *summum bonum* and for the reconciliation of reason and experience which the metaphysician has proved to be inconsistent and irreconcilable.

There can be no doubt, I suppose, that Kant, like Spinoza, had in mind what he regarded as the interest of pure religion when he set out on the tortuous path of metaphysics; but it is still more certain that the elements of religion—the moral sense, freedom, responsibility, immortality, and God—when passed through the alembic of his critical method come out as ghastly shadows of the realities of intuition and faith. Well might Bradley have been thinking of such a desiccation of religion when he uttered his famous protest against dissolving the solid world into "some spectral woof of impalpable abstractions, or unearthly ballet of bloodless categories." Reading Kant's meta-

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physical substitutes for the concrete facts of experience, one seems to be looking at the transparent sheathes of insects left hanging in the web of a spider who has sucked from them all the substance and juice of life. And who can really believe in this fantastic mummery? Indeed, scarcely the metaphysician himself. We do not know that we are free and responsible, but we must act as if we so believed. We do not know our immortality or the existence of God, but we must live as if we believed. It is all a ghastly mockery of the faith that begins in dim surmising at the mystery of the unseen, and by long experience takes on the body and assurance of conviction.

And why, one asks at the end, should any one like Kant exhaust a great brain in creating these bloodless categories and in keeping them at their mirthless dance? I believe it was because he saw that by denying teleology, as did Spinoza, one cut off the tap-root of religion and of a spiritual philosophy of any sort. Teleology Kant would have, and somewhere he thought to find it in the play of these thin figures climbing up their Jacob's Ladder from experience into the dim inane of the Absolute. But alas. If teleology has any significance for the human mind or any value for the human will, it must mean that behind the visible transformations of the world there is a conscious agent who has some purpose to achieve and is working to some definite end. Teleology is anthropomorphic, or it is nothing. Instead of which we hear from Kant that, in the purer air of metaphysics, "the end must be conceived, not as an end to be effected, but as an *independently* existing end. Consequently it is conceived only negatively" (58). Could there be a better illustration of the absurdity of rationalizing

the inferences of faith and of supposing then that your terms have any connection with the perfectly simple and practical data of intuition? What in the name of common sense, or of common veracity, is an end that is not to be effected but already exists, yet exists only as a negation? What relation does this absolute teleology beyond the time-process bear to the teleology of the human conscience and its embodiment in a personal Deity?

Kant may be credited with a great work in completing Hume's demolition of the sort of quasi-religious rationalism that builds upon the observation of nature, whether of the Spinozistic or of the open deistic type; but his effort to escape Hume's sceptical alternative by an equally metaphysical method of dealing with the data of intuition leads to an equally disastrous result. On the one hand his deity and categorical imperative and teleology turn out to be precisely the Spinozistic absolutes masquerading under other names. And on the other hand his boasted escape from scepticism proves to be perfectly futile. At the conclusion of one of the chapters in Wallace's clever little defence of Kantianism despite Kant, you may read this amusing statement :

Metaphysics . . . can no longer claim to be the foundation-stone of religion and morality. But if she cannot be the Atlas who bears the moral heaven, she can furnish a magic defence. Around the ideas of religion she throws the bulwark of invisibility; and the sword of the sceptic and the battering-ram of the materialist fall harmless on vacuity.

A Daniel come to judgement! Religion is safe because withdrawn into a pure vacuity! It sounds amazingly like the famous sentence of Tacitus : *Soliditudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.* If any one thing is

certain it is that the quasi-religious metaphysics of Spinoza and Kant simply crumples up under the acid test of scepticism. If any one lesson can be surely learnt from Kant as well as from Spinoza, it is that the endeavour to escape the human condition of intellectual impotence ends invariably in a denial of human responsibility. The sceptic and the man of faith, though they may not understand each other, can live together in mutual respect. Nor is there anything unreasonable in the mental attitude of the sceptic who, seeing the fruits of religion in the enrichment of human life, sets out upon the great experiment of faith. But between religion and metaphysics there is a deep gulf fixed and an irreconcilable feud. The bottom of that severing abyss is strewn with the wrecks of noble efforts to throw a bridge over the broken trail, from the great scholastics of the Middle Ages to such more recent champions of rationalized religion as Bradley and Pringle-Pattison and James Ward and our esteemed contemporaries, Professors Whitehead and Hocking.

Perhaps the most frequently quoted passage in Kant is the conclusion of his *Critique of Practical Reason*: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them—*the starry heavens above and the moral law within*." I do not know whether it has been noted, but the words are little more than a prose version of the nineteenth Psalm:

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

Out of that admiration and awe Kant evolved the nebular hypothesis and the categorical imperative; the Psalmist was celebrating the faith which led his people on step by step to the consummation of religious teleology in the dogma of the Word made flesh.

VI

THE EVOLUTION OF HEBRAISM

THERE are heavy sins of commission to be charged against the so-called Higher Criticism that, from its lair in Germany, raged over the world during the nineteenth century—many extravagances of conjecture and not a few absurdities. All this is plain enough to any one who plods through that enormous literature. But it was not entirely labour lost. Some results have come out of it that may be accepted as permanent and salutary; and among these must be reckoned the discovery of the evolutionary character of the Bible. Now by evolution here I do not mean teleology in the sense of a forward pointing design, for by an odd anomaly the teleological interpretation of the Old Testament was more common before the critics began to analyse its structure historically than afterwards. It is an anomaly, for example, that a Justin Martyr in the second century and a Pascal in the seventeenth should rake through the books of prophecy to detect everywhere intended types and hints and preludes of a coming Messiah, that is to say should read the Hebrew Scripture teleologically, but were restrained by their notion of direct and absolute revelation from finding there any evolution in the idea of Messiahship; whereas students of the modern school, who have so

learnedly traced the evolutionary changes in such an idea, quite generally rejected or minimized the teleological significance of this process as purposively leading up to a consummation in an actual historical Messiah. There are signs that the teleological and the evolutionary views are coming together at the last, and when that union has been effected we may be sure that the Bible will have acquired a new validity for religion. Meanwhile we should recognize the service of the higher critics in forcing the note of evolution upon a reluctant orthodoxy.

It was not so long ago that the static conception of the Old Testament prevailed almost universally among believers. There were always some reservations to such a view, compelled by the very language of Scripture itself, but in the main it was held that the moral law in its purest form and the being of God in its majestic holiness had been revealed once for all, totally, and, so to speak, *ab extra*, to the chosen people at the beginning of their history, and that the records of their later semi-idolatrous worship were to be taken as lapses from the clearly known truth. Any words put into the mouth of Jehovah, any act said to be inspired by Him, any account of His mighty doings, were accepted literally as such and had an equal authority for the conscience of men at all times.

Such a tenet possessed the convenience of simplicity, but it was bound to break on both the intellectual and the ethical sides. For the former a memorable instance was the conflict between the old orthodox—it was called the Christian—acceptance of the story of creation as a work accomplished in six solar days and the new scientific theory of evolution. The debate became hilarious when two such doughty

champions as Gladstone and Huxley entered the fray; but the conclusion was foregone from the beginning. And so of the ethical teaching of the Old Testament, whether taken from precept or example. The devastating consequence of acting on the supposed words of Jehovah at any period as literal and binding commands for all time are not far to seek. One need only turn for instance to the chapters of *Old Mortality*, in which Scott has revived the speech of the early Covenanters with incomparable art. Read the savage diatribes of Ephraim Macbriar and Poundtext and Kettledrummle and Habakkuk Mucklewrath, who take the tribal Jehovah of the primitive Israelites as identical in spirit with the God of Christianity; or hear Burley defending the cold-blooded murder of Bishop Sharp: "Did we not pray to be resolved how we should act, and was it not borne in on our hearts as if it had been written on them with the point of a diamond, 'Ye shall surely take him and slay him.' "

That is the static view of the Bible, as it may be called, which gave deadly power to the shafts of Voltaire and to the better informed attacks of the nineteenth century, and from which the labours of the critics have delivered us. And only in time: for the weakness of the older notion of a fixed revelation of truth was that, if in any one point of fact or of morals the book was found faulty, the whole fabric of authority came tumbling to the ground. Fortunately, despite the rigid "fundamentalism" of a few Protestants and the more cautious conservatism of Rome, the evolutionary character of the Bible has been established beyond cavil. We have learned a good deal of the history of Israel; in its larger outline we know how their sacred books were finally put together from

successive strata, and how these strata represent the developing religious sense of the people. This change of attitude towards the sacred Scripture of the Jews I hold to be of almost incalculable importance for the future of religion : it takes the ground from under the older criticism of the book from the angle of fact and ethics ; it supports and clarifies the teleological relation between the two Testaments, and it puts the claims of revelation in a new and thoroughly consistent light.

Now the strands of development traceable in the Old Testament may be classified conveniently under five heads, though of course the dividing lines must not be drawn too sharply, viz. : (1) the idea of God, (2) morality, (3) redemption, (4) cult, (5) the Messiah and the Kingdom of the Messiah. Of these five strands the purely evolutionary mark is perhaps clearest in the first two (God and morality), as they are certainly the most basic, and to a minor degree in the third (redemption) ; the fourth may be regarded as man's response in worship to the changes of the first three ; while the fifth gives precision to the teleological note of the process as moving to an appointed historical conclusion. It is not within the scope of my design to follow in detail these various lines of growth, which indeed have become a commonplace of scholarship and in a general way are comprehended by all intelligent readers of the Bible ; but it is significant for our purpose to point to the fact, not so widely known, that the development along these lines, and particularly in the idea of God and in the moral sense, though it has among the Jews, as we shall see, its unique aspect, is in the main only one segment of the grand arc of man's religious evolution. Read

superficially, and as the late priestly redactors meant them to be read, the books of the Old Testament contain the record of the providential dealings of the One God, Jehovah, with the world and with His chosen people, Israel. But these pious editors were too little versed in the chicanery of historical methods, or perhaps were too honest, to manipulate the documentary material at their disposal so as to cover up entirely its original significance. As a consequence there are clear intimations scattered through the Old Testament of very early, if not quite primitive, forms of superstition.

It is pretty well agreed among anthropologists that the most primitive manifestation of religion revolves about two ideas, or instincts, to which they give the names respectively of mana, which refers to the supernatural, or otherworldly, element of the complex, and taboo, which includes more specially the ethical element, these two aspects being from the first, as they are to the end, intimately associated. Now the notion of mana seems to be connected with the vague sentiment of wonder, fluctuating between hope and fear, at the unaccountable waxing and waning of a sense of power within the breast of the savage. At moments, he knows not why, he is filled with confidence; the world is his, and anything he attempts will succeed. There is mana in him. At other times his confidence, he knows not why, goes from him, and he grows despondent and timid; mana has departed from him, or, if still present, has become obstructive instead of helpful. With this alternation of hope and fear within his own breast he feels that something outside is working for or against him. By an unconscious act of inference, too instinctive to be called properly faith

yet containing the germ of the most spiritualized form of the will to believe, he ascribes to the world about him the same mysterious mana, an invisible force behind or within the various objects of nature, which, for reasons he cannot well understand, has a vaguely human attitude of friendliness or hostility towards him, a purpose to help or to harm, and which he must placate as best he can. This I take to be the tap-root of all religion, as persistent as it is aboriginal. I remember once many years ago talking with a learned and sound psychologist of the University of Wisconsin, when this matter came up. I was rather boasting of my enlightenment, and saying that I not only did not feel but could not to the slightest degree comprehend the real or half-pretended nervousness over spilt salt, new moons, ladders, the number thirteen, etc., etc. Indeed, so far as I was aware, I was entirely free of popular superstitions. My psychological friend smiled and said: Are you quite sure of that? think again. And after reflection, I had to confess: I did instinctively act on the principle of "bulling my luck" while it lasted (I fear the game of poker was in my mind), and I did half consciously feel that some unformulated power was working with me at such times. And, Ah, replied my friend, that, with the opposite feeling, is the very beginning and the very end of all superstition.—He was right, and I do not believe there is a man living in the world today who is without it. We may call it superstition, as an irrational state from which we ought to free our minds, and certainly it may take absurd and even vicious forms; but with its natural adjunct of taboo it may also flower in the most spiritual type of religion.

The first step forward would appear to be in the direction of a clearer differentiation or, so to speak, crystallization of this fluid power of mana. Some stone, unusually coloured or shaped, strikes the imagination, and the savage treasures it, and fondles it, as possessing a particular virtue of its own. He is awed by the sublimity of some lonely elevation, or by the vitality of some loftier tree with its oracular murmurings, or by the life-dispensing quality of springing water, at some spot in his wanderings he is particularly aware of the sacred Power as if he met it face to face; and his heart goes out to these objects and places as special centres of mystery. So mana comes to be more and more localized in nature. On the other hand, the mana within himself is easily extended to the family or clan with which he is one in blood and life. And so mana comes to be more and more partitioned out tribally. In both ways we evidently are approaching the time when the mythopoeic faculty will transform these local and tribal segregations of mana into more and more personally conceived gods and demons.

Now it is just this turning point in mythology that appears in the earlier records of Jewish religion and that crops up again and again in the most surprising manner down to the latest period of their development. For the association of particular scenes and objects with the divine Power the instances in the patriarchal age are numerous, and little effort has been made by the priestly editors to conceal their significance: the oaks (or terebinths) of Mamre where Abraham was visited by the three men and the Lord; the altar raised at Bethel where God spoke to Jacob in his sleep; Peniel where the same patriarch

saw God face to face and strove with Him ; the sacred tree by Shechem, etc. And all through the history of the Israelites in Canaan there are references to the sacredness of high places and stones and pillars, from which the people were withdrawn very slowly, not even completely when, after the Restoration, the worship of the diminished nation was centred at Jerusalem. These local cults may have been in part lapses from broader notions introduced by the prophets, particularly by Moses, but in the main they were rather survivals from a primitive age, since the mass of the people always lagged behind their spiritual leaders.

And so of the tribal conception of God. Before the Exodus it is probable that the various groups later amalgamated into the people of Israel had their special deities. Jehovah (or Yahweh, if we adopt the pedantic form of the name) would appear to have been originally the tribal Lord of the Midianites, or Kenites, from whom Moses took a wife. As a vaguely personified manifestation of mana in nature he was a god of storm and mountain and fire ; but he was a warrior god also who could strike panic into the enemy. After his display of might in delivering the Israelites from Egypt, he was chosen by the nation as their own, and the covenant between them was ratified by a sacrifice which made them, people and god, of one blood and one kin. For centuries it is clear that Jehovah was regarded as no more than a Lord, or Baal, among the Lords of the surrounding peoples, more powerful and to Israel more friendly, but still one among many.

From these beginnings we can trace the steps by which, on the one hand, Jehovah becomes more and

more dissevered from localized manifestations of his power, until his sway extended indifferently over the whole earth ; or if, even at the last, he was particularly associated with the high place of Zion, it was in a Jerusalem glorified in imagination as the religious capital of the world. And, on the other hand, we can see how he gradually dominated the rival Baals, and absorbed them, until he became the one only God of all mankind. And if, again, the national spirit was never entirely outgrown, and indeed grew more intense with the struggle of a tiny people to preserve its identity amidst the contending empires of the East, and if consequently Jehovah to the end was regarded as specially concerned with the destinies of Israel, yet it was an Israel by whom all the nations of the earth were to be brought to the feet of the Most High.

And with this local and tribal expansion runs a parallel change in the character, or personality, of Jehovah. It would be easy to illustrate this evolution by innumerable examples, but two will suffice. For the first I take the familiar story, in I Kings xviii and xix, of Elijah on Mount Carmel and Mount Horeb. Early in the ninth century Ahab, the King, had taken a Phoenician woman, Jezebel, to be queen, and she was using force to supplant the worship of Jehovah by that of the Baal of her own people, Melkart. Evidently the Israelites were wavering in their allegiance. Then comes the test, when Elijah challenges the four and fifty prophets of the alien Lord to try whether their god or his will send down fire upon the sacrificial victim on the altar. The result of that trial on Mount Carmel need not be repeated : the significance is in the taunts of Elijah when, for all their praying and self-gashing and leaping, the prophets of Melkart

bring no response. "Cry aloud," is the jeering exhortation; "for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." Clearly we are at the dividing line, where in comparison with Jehovah the gods of other peoples, to Elijah at least, have so diminished in power as to be on the verge of passing into non-existence.

And the sequel, now on Horeb ("the mount of God" in the South, or Sinai, where the Jews, under Moses, had made their covenant with Jehovah), shows the corresponding spiritual change. Elijah has fled from the threatened revenge of Jezebel, and, in utter discouragement and doubt, prays that his life may be taken away. And then comes the vision. "Go forth," he is commanded, "and stand upon the mount before the Lord (*i.e.* Jehovah)." And so, as he stands in a cave, looking out, we may suppose, upon the slope of the sacred elevation, a great and rending wind passes by, and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in these.

And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?¹

¹ The exact meaning of the Hebrew for "a still small voice" is not certain. In the recent *History of Israel*, by Professors Robinson and Oesterley, the phrase is rendered, I, 306: "Hark! a fine silence." This may be right, but it is difficult to reconcile such "silence" with the following statement, "when Elijah heard it." I make no pretension to competence in Hebrew philology, but venture to ask whether the meaning of the words may not rather be: "a voice as it were a fine silence," "a voice so refined and inarticulate as to be scarcely a sound"? In any case the "still small

It is as if we were hearing the unconscious reflections of the prophet to himself : No, our Lord Jehovah is not, as our fathers thought Him, a vague personification of the power of nature displayed in the tempest and the earthquake and the lightning ; rather is He a breath, a spirit, a voice speaking to the heart of man, bidding him be strong and obey and serve.

For our example of spiritual development we pass over a period of three or four centuries to an unknown prophet whose words have been included in the book of Isaiah. He is writing for the restored community after the trying and illuminating experience of exile, and, in the name of Jehovah, is exhorting them to repentance and trust (lvii, 15) :

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.²

Beyond that human speech has not gone in its effort to express the majesty of the everlasting God ; and I would bid you observe that its sublimity is purchased not by repudiating the most primitive sense of the supernatural, but by deepening and purifying the precise forms of awe and mystery that started the human mind—how many aeons ago—on its search for religion. The “high place” that touched the savage

voice” of the Authorized Version is close enough to the original, and is nothing less than literary genius.

² I cannot bring myself to meddle with the perfect English of the Authorized Version, and indeed it gives the *effect* of the original better than does a literal translation, which would be something like this : “For thus saith the high and uplifted one that sitteth enthroned forever [, and whose name is Holy] : On high and as the holy one I dwell, and with him that is contrite and of a humble spirit.”

imagination as a special home of mana is now the throne of eternity carried far off into the invisible heavens, and the incomprehensible access of courage and confidence in the savage breast is no longer a tribal possession of himself or his blood kindred, but has passed into reverence of the Holy One who condescends "to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite." There is a vast reach of human experience in these late prophetic utterances, but their inspiration comes down in a straight line from the earliest and most inarticulate sense of an otherworld within and about us. Mana was upon us when first we became men, and is upon us now; it is universal and unescapable. Only our interpretations of it differ.

I have dwelt at some length on the idea of God among the Jews for the reason that the other elements of religion are so intimately involved in it that their development runs on quite parallel lines. And particularly this is true of morality which, as a growth from taboo, is closely associated with the origin of otherworldliness in mana. Now taboo is just the feeling of awe before some object or place or phenomenon of nature, or before some person, peculiarly possessed of mana. And as awe includes both attraction and fear, so taboo may manifest itself in refraining from careless contact with the sacred object or person because of its or his power to transmit either a blessing or a curse. The relation of such inhibitions to morality, as we understand the term, may not be grasped immediately; but a little study will show how, from the very first, taboo acted as a curb upon the impulses of the individual: certain things are set apart, and from these he must withhold his hand; certain

persons are sacred, and to them must be accorded respect and obedience; a woman at certain times must not be touched; a corpse may infect with its mana of uncleanness. Out of these inhibitions grow the tribal customs, which, at the lowest, impose order upon the conflicting impulses of life and, with the growth of civilization, pass into more and more ethically directed laws. It is true there is a difficulty here, owing to the fact that the two prime constituents of religion, otherworldliness and morality, do not always advance by equal steps, and that as a consequence one finds stages of society in which mythology lags behind the moral sense of the people or, less frequently, times when the moral code has failed to keep pace with a more spiritualized conception of the gods. But this is no more than to say that religion at any moment is likely to be defective because unbalanced; it affords no warrant at all for the notion, fairly common today, that the two phases can be radically dissevered so as to produce a religion of pure non-moral otherworldliness or of pure secular morality. As at their beginning the two have one and the same root, so in their highest form they are indissolubly combined. That is a fact which can be illustrated by the Jehovah of Isaiah, who dwells in the eternal heavens as the Holy One. For the root meaning of the word "holy" in Hebrew is "separate,"⁸ and carries us back to the origin of taboo as belonging to that which, though in nature, is yet a separate supernatural power. So Jehovah is now holy because separate from earthly things by his heavenly dwelling, and separate by his purity from the unclean doings of mankind. When Isaiah,

⁸ This etymology, I believe, is disputable, but the idea of "separation" certainly adheres to the usage of the word.

the son of Amoz, beheld Jehovah "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," by the altar of the temple, and heard the Seraphim crying one unto the other, "Holy, holy, holy!" he was but expressing in visionary form what the later prophet of the same book put into the mouth of God: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts," and what Habakkuk intended by his declaration: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." All which was embodied in the table of the commandments: "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children."

Here I would pause a moment to guard against misapprehension. In carrying otherworldliness and morality, as the essential components of religion, back to the primitive complex of mana and taboo, I may seem to have fallen into the common error of oversimplification. There is, for instance, the belief in the immortality of the soul, which, if it does not originate in the apparition of the dead in dreams, yet certainly is confirmed by that universal experience. And on the other side there must be taken into account the instinctive sympathy of man for man which would appear to be at least one of the roots of social ethics. I am not overlooking these apparent complications, but I would point to the fact that, whether or not dreams and sympathy must be accepted as independent sources of religion, their influence soon merges into the greater current flowing from the mystery of mana.

Again, I would not have it supposed that the genetic association of otherworldliness and morality is peculiar to the Jews. It is in truth common to all reli-

gions of all peoples. But I believe that nowhere else can there be discovered so clear a consciousness and so steady an affirmation of this connection as in the Mosaic law which formed the first constitution of the Jewish nation (so far as that code can be distinguished from later accretions), and, less doubtfully, in the long catena of prophetic writings, commencing with Jehovah's anathemas of evil in Amos, which sound as if meant for the greedy forgetful world of the present hour. It is this notable fact that explains, though it may not justify, Matthew Arnold's exaggeration of the ethical side of Hebraic religion in his *God and the Bible*:

We urge all whom the current theology, both popular and learned, repels . . . to take as their foundation in reading the Bible this account of God, which can be verified: "God is the eternal power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness," instead of the other: "God is a person who thinks and loves," which cannot.

That, I say, overweighs the balance, since we have no more evidence of a *God* who makes for righteousness than of a *God* who is a person, and indeed the whole force of the comparative study of religions goes to prove that the two ideas are inseparable. But Arnold's excessive valuation of conduct is a proper corrective of a tendency, not uncommon today, to think of religion as a sort of vague other-worldliness utterly remote from life.

So far, then, the Old Testament is only the record of one special segment of the general course of religious evolution, though, for reasons to be given later, a segment of extraordinary significance. But when we pass from God and the moral code to the notion of redemption, we touch upon a phase of religion that

belongs in unique fashion to the Jewish people. It is true that redemption can be in a general way connected with the confidence felt when mana is favourable and the laws of taboo have been properly observed, and in this sense it can be found among other peoples,—which is no more than to say that the idea is essentially religious. But it is peculiar to the Jews by association with a particular event which occurred at the outset of their national life. No doubt the mythopoeic imagination has been at work in the story of the deliverance of the tribes out of bondage to Egypt. But something very real then happened; something very strange and startling; something that fixed itself indelibly in the memory of the people and coloured their whole national consciousness. In some way the pursuing army of the Egyptians was destroyed by water; and it is significant that certain advanced critics, to whom the charge of rationalizing miracles in the manner of the eighteenth century sceptics would be abhorrent, are driven here to seek for authentic natural phenomena to explain such a retreat and sudden reflux of the Red Sea as described in the account of the Exodus. Now the influence and importance of this event, however it occurred, can scarcely be exaggerated. Its result was *the bringing together of religion and history*, the associating of the will of God with the destinies of a chosen race, to a degree and in a manner absolutely unique. And this coalescence of religion and history, I would repeat, is a matter the scope and significance of which are only beginning to be realized. The Jews themselves never lost sight of that event; in times of prosperity they might grow careless of its memory, but under calamities—and most of their history was calamitous

—it regained its vivid presence and was the source of their indomitable tenacity of hope. No reader of the Psalms but has been impressed, perhaps a little bored, by the reiterated references to that ancient deliverance as the keynote of Israel's faith. And it may be said here that the desire of certain short-sighted Christians to eliminate or abbreviate these peculiarly Hebraic passages from the Scripture used in modern worship would, if carried out, cut at the very root of that historical actuality upon which the singular claims of their religion depend. But that is by the way. Our business at the present is to note how this historical event, by embedding itself in the deeper consciousness of the people, directed the development of their religious ideas along special lines. And the nature of this influence can best be shown by quoting at some length a passage from the forty-third chapter of Isaiah which belongs to the same exilic or post-exilic period with the definition of Jehovah, as the Holy One, already cited :

But now thus saith the Lord (Jehovah) that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. . . .

For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy saviour; I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Fear not: for I am with thee. . . .

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there

is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.

It needs no special acumen to see how the deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea, followed by other mighty acts of the sort and culminating in the destruction of Babylon and the ensuing Restoration, has coincided with the ordinary evolution of religious ideas to enhance the glory of Jehovah as the only Saviour, and how with this growing monotheism comes the attribution of holiness to God as to a Being apart and set above the world. With the holiness of Israel's God is naturally associated the pride of Israel itself as a holy people, set apart by Jehovah, *and this for a purpose*. "Ye are my witnesses": Israel was chosen not for itself alone, but to the end that finally, by its loyalty to Jehovah and by its purity of life, all the peoples of the earth might be brought to a knowledge of the one God. Thus from the historic fact of Israel's deliverance springs the teleological conception of a divine Providence working through the events of history, a conception of which one may find shadowy hints in other religions and for which Plato was reaching out in his philosophy, but which in its developed form belongs preeminently to the Hebrews.

So far we see the idea of deliverance cooperating with the natural forces of evolution to affect the theistic and ethical elements of religion. Its influence in the main is by way of accelerating and intensifying and centralizing. But it works forwards also, and in a manner more revolutionary. That historic deliverance is described as an act of "redemption," the word in Hebrew being the same as that used for

ransoming a prisoner, or buying at a price. As the story in Isaiah reads, it is primarily the Egyptians who pay the price, but we see also another idea struggling for expression. Not only is Israel to be the witness to God but the chosen servant of God, and this word points on to the later passages of Isaiah in which the notion of the "suffering servant" reaches its astounding climax in the fifty-third chapter. What has happened? I would not speak with too much assurance about a text that has exercised the ingenuity of many learned commentators, but the correct interpretation seems to me fairly clear and simple. Through the sufferings of Israel in the servitude of exile a new meaning has come into the traditional thought of redemption: earlier it was Israel that was redeemed, and Egypt that paid the price; now Israel itself is paying the price, to the end that through its suffering and humiliation the whole world may be ransomed for God. And through this changed application of the price of redemption an extraordinary turn will be given to those other elements in the evolution of Hebrew religion which I have summarized under the heads of cult, the Messiah, and the Kingdom.

The limits of time make it impossible to study this change in the many aspects of worship embraced in the term cult. I must confine myself to a few words about sacrifice as the central act of worship, and to the Passover as the peculiarly Hebrew form of sacrifice. Now as the origin of the Passover is related in the twelfth chapter of Exodus, it consisted of two ceremonies. For the first the blood of the Paschal lamb was to be smeared on the lintel and the side posts of every Jewish house in Egypt, in order that when the

Lord of Israel smote the first-born sons of the oppressors He might "pass over" that door and not suffer the destroyer to come in. Meanwhile, for the second part, the household, within closed doors and through the night, should feast together with special rites on the body of the victim. And this custom the Israelites were to observe as an ordinance forever. In the mind of the Hebrews the Paschal sacrifice and dinner were thus associated with the last of the plagues by which Jehovah effected their redemption out of bondage. But as a matter of fact the double ceremony was taken over from practices of immemorial antiquity, and combines the most primitive and universal purposes of the blood-rite: the *apotropaic* use of blood to turn away and ward off evil powers, and the communal participation in the body of a sacred victim by which the blood kinship between the members of a clan and their totemistic deity is maintained. The point that concerns us is the way in which these primeval customs were absorbed into a memorial celebration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and how from this historic association they acquired such importance as to dominate the whole ritual worship of the people. We see the agricultural offering of a sheaf at the beginning of the barley harvest added and subordinated to the nomadic sacrifice of a Paschal lamb at the new moon next the Spring Equinox. For seven days the eating of ordinary leavened bread is forbidden, evidently some ancient taboo being taken over and explained by the tradition that for the hasty flight out of Egypt only unleavened bread could be prepared. Bitter herbs are added to the meal as a reminder that "the Egyptians made bitter the lives of our fathers." In time the cruder notions of sacrifice

and of the blood rite were mitigated or forgotten, while foreign elements were introduced into the sacred meal, such as the cups of wine mixed with water; but always the whole ceremony was redolent of redemption as the dominating idea in the Hebrew conception of religion. The meal "was at once historical in character and eschatological. It appealed by symbol, exposition, and song to a great redemptive act in the past as the pledge of a great redemptive act in the future."⁴

Here we touch on the most distinctive and dominant note of Hebrew religion, the conviction that the great redemptive act in the past of their history was the symbol and forerunner and guaranty of a greater redemptive act in the future. By this I do not mean that the expectation of redemption and of a redeemer can be cut off from the aboriginal sources of all religion. Indeed if such a belief arose exclusively among a single people, we should regard it as accidental and not fundamental to the spiritual experience of mankind, and as correspondingly deficient in significance. What I do assert is that the actual liberation of Israel from Egypt so affected the imagination of the people, or let us say of the finer minds among them, as to lend a special character and an exceptional vigour to the whole idea of redemption. As their national history began with a miracle of deliverance, involving a covenant of allegiance to the Lord Jehovah, so it should have its consummation in a similar and more miraculous deliverance, and now not into the wilderness and ever threatening extinction but to

⁴ The concluding words of the chapter on The Paschal Meal in Dr. Gray's *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, on which my summary of the Passover chiefly depends.

their predestined overlordship in the world-wide Kingdom of their God. And as their victory over Egypt had been the work of a single prophet, under the guidance of Jehovah, so their final triumph should be carried out under one who was to be at once in spirit a rebirth of their first great prophet and in the flesh heir of their first great king, a Moses and a David.⁵

I shall not attempt to trace even briefly the evolution of the idea of a Messiah and his Kingdom, which took shape rather late in the national consciousness and which in the so-called eschatological period between the Restoration and the final destruction of Jerusalem trailed off into wild extravagances. For our purpose the important matter is this: some eighteen or nineteen hundred years ago a small band of Jews taught that the expected Messiah, or Christ as the word became in Greek, had actually appeared in the person of Jesus, and that in his coming the whole cycle of religious ideas had attained its realization, its climax, its *telos*. And this they taught with a fervour that created a new religion. Now observe that so far we are in the realm of fact, not of conjecture. These primitive Christians unquestionably believed that the God who had set apart the Jewish people and had spoken through the prophets, had at the last revealed Himself face to face in one whom they had known and handled and heard. Whether or not Jesus

⁵ Undoubtedly the historic Moses was magnified in the course of time into a more or less legendary figure. But I hold, with what seems to me the soundest result of scholarship, that Moses was a real man, who led the Jews out of Egypt, was the author of their covenant with Jehovah, and in the name of Jehovah promulgated a new Law. There was however a long stretch of evolution between the Jehovah and Law of Moses and the Jehovah and morality of Isaiah.

had uttered the exact words : "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," the early Church believed that he had so spoken. Whether or not the Sermon on the Mount conveys the precise teaching of Jesus, the disciples believed that in such manner he had renewed and spiritualized the ancient Law. They believed that he was the promised redeemer, a second Moses. But here the events of history drove them to modify the idea of redemption in two respects. The rejection of their Master by the body of the people compelled them to complete the process of denationalization, so to speak, which had already gone pretty far among the broader-minded Hebrews. The Messiah was to redeem the world not indirectly by establishing Israel in sovereignty over a universal kingdom, but his redemption was offered to all men, immediately, without distinction of race, and his Kingdom was to embrace all those who confessed his name and bowed the knee to him as the vice-regent of God.

The other change was even more important for the future of religion. By the Jews the Messiah had always been regarded as a triumphant and glorious victor ; how then could this Jesus who had suffered the ignominy of the Cross be he for whom they had looked ? That had been the stone of offence over which Paul had stumbled, and which had caused no little heart-burning among the disciples themselves until their belief in his resurrection and reappearance gave them a key to the difficulty. And in the stories of Emmaus and of Philip's conversation with the eunuch we can see just how they used that key. Long ago the chapter of Deutero-Isaiah, to which we have already referred, had made a curious shift in the idea of redemption. Reflecting on the inglorious fate of

his people in exile, the prophet asked himself whether the price of redemption was not to be paid by the chosen people, rather than for them, and whether it was not as "suffering servant" that they were to fulfil their mission of redeeming the world. And then, in a mysterious passage the meaning of which for the prophet himself still puzzles commentators, there is a further shift, and suddenly the "suffering servant" seems to be used as a name, not for the people, but for some strange individual by whom Israel, and through Israel the world, is to be saved. Now however obvious the implication of this passage may seem to us after the event, it had never been generally accepted by the Jews as prophetic of the Messiah—never until, as we see in the stories of Emmaus and of Philip, the ignominious death and, as they believed, victorious resurrection of Jesus brought to his disciples this final transformation by uniting the "suffering servant" and the royal Messiah together in the one Redeemer.

The result of that coalescence was immediate and stupendous. At once it was felt in the remodelling of the central idea of cult. The death of the Messiah now becomes the one true sacrifice to which all the sacrificial rites of the past had been types and preparations, and the victim is now not an offering made to God, but, by a reversion to the most primitive notion, an emissary of God suffering for man—rather it was God and man in one, paying the fatal price of redemption. On the other side the Passover feast, which through all the accretions and refinements of time had preserved some faint reminiscence of the primitive blood union of a clan with its totem, becomes a Paschal meal instituted by Jesus himself as a perpetual memorial of his redeeming act of self-immolation

and a means of appropriation into his mystical body.

Such, barely and drily summarized, was the belief of the early disciples of Jesus; and that belief, I cannot assert too strongly, is a plain fact of history, itself open to no reasonable doubt. But immediately it raises two questions of a troublesome nature, one still historical, the other passing into the realm of philosophy. For the first, we are bound to ask whether this belief of the disciples about Jesus corresponds with what Jesus actually believed and taught of himself. That is the question over which the Higher Critics of Germany laboured indefatigably for a century; and upon their negative conclusion rests the whole weight of the technically so-called *Liberalische Theologie* which came to a head in 1900, when Harnack published his lectures on *The Essence of Christianity*. According to that popular manual of *Religion Made Easy* the dogmatic elements of the Christian faith, the Messianic and other supernatural claims put into the mouth of Jesus, were all the retroactive work of the Church which began immediately after the Master's death. The gospel actually preached by Jesus himself had been beautifully simple and humanely unexacting; it had been limited to calling men to a trust in the goodness of God as in the benevolence of a heavenly Father, and to a life of amiable morality. Harnack's little book was reverently written, with the laudable intention of saving a remnant of Christianity for an age grown scientific and critical, not to say irreligious. But the humanitarianism it inculcated was a thing moribund from the beginning. It was vulnerable both in its scholarship and in its piety: in scholarship because by no sound canon of criticism can one eliminate the supernatural claims for himself attributed to Jesus

as unauthentic while retaining any other part of his recorded teaching as genuine; in piety because it is idle to suppose that any religion can be preserved as a going concern on so impoverished a basis. And there is further the difficulty that belief in the loving fatherhood of God, however facile it may sound in statement, really requires as great a stretch of faith as does any one of the dogmas eliminated in the name of simplification. Newman was right: the hardest of all the demands of religion is just the initial belief in a personal God.

I am not going to follow the steps by which this particular brand of humanitarian special pleading has been demolished. In the main the work was accomplished by two men, Loisy in France and Schweitzer in Germany, who proved, as I dare say, conclusively that as a simple fact of history, however one may like or dislike it, Jesus himself did clearly and positively claim to be the Messiah, or Christ. The culmination of his ministry came with the confession to the High Priest: "I am; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." And to the work of those scholars we may add the more recent conclusions of Hoskyns and Davey in *The Riddle of the New Testament*, that Jesus thought of himself as one in whose life and death was to be fulfilled the long prophecy of a divine redemption through sacrifice.

Liberal theology—I use the phrase in its narrow technical sense—is not buried; you will find it still taught in certain of our seminaries which boast of being very advanced, but which in fact have stuck at the point reached by criticism in the year 1900. But the belated advocates of religion made easy, with their

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substitution of a few neat little moralisms for the supernatural credulities of the primitive church, are having a hard time. Today for any open-minded reader of the New Testament the issue is clear-cut and not honourably to be evaded. It is not now a question of history—that I insist is settled—but of faith, to which each of us must answer as he will. We may believe that Jesus was a hypocrite or a self-deluded fanatic; in which case there is no Christianity. Or we may believe that he was in truth what he alleged himself to be; in which case it is hard to see how we can avoid identifying ultimately Christianity with the Catholic dogma of the Incarnation and with the Catholic sacrament of the Eucharist. To one who approaches the subject from a critical study of the Old Testament the same question may present itself philosophically in slightly different form: has the historic evolution of Hebraic religion a true *telos* in the coming of the Son of man, or is that evolution part of the grand illusion of creatures doomed to live in a world devoid of purpose and without meaning?

VII

THE TELOS OF CHRISTIANITY

IN THE preceding lecture we made a rapid survey of the growth of religion among the Jews under five principal heads. The facts in themselves are curious and interesting; but my purpose in recalling them to your memory was their evidence for a thesis of significance reaching far beyond mere curiosity or interest—the thesis that, as Platonism is the only philosophy which independently developed a high form of teleology, so Christianity is the only completely teleological religion of the world.

Now by teleology I mean something quite definite, something involved in the very etymology of the word. As we have already noted, the element *telos* of the Greek compound, like its English equivalent “end,” has a double use, and as a consequence the word “teleology” can have two quite different meanings. It may signify only that a process of change or evolution, by some inner force of chance or fatality, comes to a conclusion; or it may signify, and as a philosophical term does more properly signify, that the end is related to the beginning as the aim of a conscious agent. This difference can be illustrated by our physical and mental life. In the former we grow from child to man, so far as we are aware, by no conscious effort, and the *telos*, or end, is the mere cessation of a process; in our

mental life, on the contrary, we are constantly proposing to ourselves some end to be attained, a goal to be reached, a good to be achieved, through the overcoming of obstacles. Briefly expressed, the difference lies in the absence or presence of purpose; and teleology, rightly defined, means more than evolution, it means purposive evolution. And so, if we apply this distinction to the historic course of Judaeo-Christian religion we are asking whether there is here simply an evolution of belief which, taking its direction from Moses, reaches its conclusion in the supposed fulfilment of prophecy by Jesus, an evolution, that is, by some inner potentiality of human nature, and nothing more, or whether this evolution was purposive, controlled, in part at least controlled, by a conscious super-human agent who from the beginning was directing it towards a proposed end. To take the primary factor of that cycle of religion, the question we are asking is this: were the changes in the idea of God purely psychological, a product of the evolution of the human brain under the impulsion of some immanent self-determining law, or did they correspond to the work of a transcendent agent, of an actual God, who was purposely making Himself better and better known through the limiting conditions of time and human nature? Were the prophets of Israel uttering merely what they believed, with no warrant in fact, or was Jehovah gradually revealing Himself through their halting words?

Now of the teleology of Judaism in the first of these two meanings, that is as a bare process of evolution with a beginning and an end, there can be no doubt. We are able to see, as up to a very recent time it was not seen, how, scattered all through the Old Testament,

there are hints of religious belief and practice hanging over from a remote prehistoric age. In this way the religion of Israel is no unattached phenomenon but a segment of the religious experience of the whole race. At the same time we can see, which is a matter of equal or even greater significance, that this segment is cut off from the general course of religion by its boundary within two historic events, the exodus under Moses and the Messianic claims of Jesus. And it was just this enclave, so to speak, of some fifteen hundred years between two limiting events, or personages, that gives a beginning and an end to the course of Judaeo-Christianity in a manner to be found nowhere else in the world.

To confine our attention to a single point, we can mark this distinction by the fact that the evolution of religion generally proceeds towards a monotheistic conception of deity, but that in Judaism, and there alone, does this conception, starting from a definite impulse, come to a proper *telos*. Take the Greeks, for instance, for a type of the non-Semitic peoples. There too we can observe the development of primitive superstition through the various stages of polytheism to the narrowed pantheon of the poets; we see Zeus more and more dominating the worship of the intelligent classes until we seem to be on the verge of a pure monotheism—and then what happens? Somehow there is a loosening of grasp, a slip backwards. Among the later philosophers the conception of God tends to lose itself in a vague and shifty sort of pantheism or in ineffective transcendentalism, while the populace sinks deeper into the daemonic cults out of which it had never been really elevated. And the same phenomenon can be

observed in the other great branch of the Aryan race, settled in India.¹

Or take the Semitic people of Assyria, who were intelligent enough to found great empires of which the Jews were politically an insignificant fragment. There too one sees religion moving on towards monotheism, and fragmentary hymns of praise or petition can be cited from their literature that might suitably be placed among the Hebraic Psalms. But again the process never comes to a head, while the older, wilder superstitions not only persist, as they did also sporadically until a late period among the Hebrews, but are never assimilated into the main stream of evolution. The difference may be illustrated by a concrete example. In the first chapters of Genesis we have an ancient myth of creation which seems to have come from the common property of the Semites. At least there have been preserved fragments of the so-called Seven Tables of Creation which offer a comparison of the Babylonian form of the myth with the Hebraic; and the contrast is profound. As the story appears in Genesis (a relatively late version, rewritten by some priestly scribe), the fantastic elements have been eliminated, or reduced to a minimum, while all the emphasis is laid on the creative power of Jehovah. The whole legend is simple and sublime, and even shows curious adaptability to a scientific theory of evolution. In passing from it to the Babylonian tablets it is as if one slipped from the sobriety of daylight into a succession of telescoping nightmares. For illustration I choose the second day of the Hebrew account, for the reason that in it the author has kept

¹ Buddhism, the apparent exception to this generalization, I have dealt with in the first chapter of *The Catholic Faith*.

closer than elsewhere to the traditional cosmology which pictured the earth as a disc floating upon water and domed by a crystalline cup, the firmament, above which the water of the sea was raised like a liquid arch :

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament : and so it was.

And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Against this set the account of the same cosmic event in the fourth of the Babylonian Tables, where it is involved in a perfectly fantastic combat between the high god Marduk and an aqueous monster named Tiamat :

He [Marduk] returned to Tiamat, whom he had conquered.
 The lord stood upon Tiamat's body,
 And with his merciless club he crushed her skull.
 He cut through the channels of her blood,
 And he made the north wind to bear it away to secret places.
 And his fathers saw it, they rejoiced and were glad;
 Gifts and presents they brought him.
 Then the lord rested, and eagerly examined her corpse.
 Then with cunning art he divided her trunk.
 He split her like a flat fish into two halves.
 One half of her he set up, and made a covering for the heavens ;
 He drove in a bolt, and stationed a watch,
 And bade them not allow her waters to issue forth.
 Then he established the heavens as counterpart to the world
 below,
 And set it over against the Ocean, the dwelling of Nudimmud.²

The point I would make by this comparison is that the tendency towards monotheism never among the Semites generally freed itself from its matrix of crude polytheism and grotesque fancy. And this, everywhere

² Taken from Herbert E. Ryle's edition of *The Book of Genesis*.

except in Israel, is characteristic of the evolution of mythology. It is as if one followed admiringly a rivulet from its source in the deep hidden reservoirs of the earth, which proceeds on its way, gathering force and volume from many tributaries until it swells into a majestic river, and then unexpectedly, even when the goal of the infinite ocean is in sight,

Sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his current . . .
A foil'd circuitous wanderer.

The contrast between the frustrated course of religion elsewhere and the relatively straight line of development among the Jews is a part of history, and a part that calls for explanation. But it is true also that after the high-water mark recorded in Deutero-Isaiah and other prophets of the post-exilic period there came a turn in the forward progress of Israel, and religion there too threatened to lose itself in the bogs as it did actually among other peoples. That danger can be seen in the so-called eschatological literature produced after the closing of the canon of the Old Testament, wherein the prophetic note runs off into wild fantastic imaginings of Jehovah and the other-world. And then with the national rejection of Jesus and the final destruction of Jerusalem the retrogression is fixed by the extinction of sacrifice, practical or symbolical, from cult and by the impoverishment of the kindred idea of redemption. The Talmudic literature of the Jews in the Christian era is not without great qualities; but in its two main lines of Halakah and Haggadah we see the ethics of the Law petrified into a mass of formal regulations, and the theology of the prophets lending itself to meanderings of Kab-

balistic lunacy. In other words it is a fact of history that, from the purely evolutionary point of view, the genuine *telos* of Judaism must be sought in Christianity.

That this was the view of the early Christians themselves there can be no doubt. They believed, and reiterated their belief, that, as Jesus was the actual Messiah, or Christ, so in him all Scripture had its perfect and final fulfilment, and that all the prophetic history of Israel pointed to his coming. So much is beyond cavil, and one of the surest results of modern scholarship is that Jesus so thought of himself. Taking the word teleology in its bare historic sense, we are justified therefore in saying that the only complete example of it in religion is that which, beginning with the physical redemption of Israel under Moses, came to its consummation in the supposed spiritual redemption of the world under a greater than Moses, the only theism of history independently achieved and consistently maintained. This alone is a fact worthy of reflection. But it brings us also to the problem of teleology in the higher and special sense of the word: was the *telos* of Christianity something more than the mere conclusion of an historic process? does it indicate a purpose behind the development of religious ideas, a conscious planning agent who foresaw the end from the beginning and guided Israel step by step until its task was finished? was there indeed a Jehovah speaking through the prophets as they themselves proclaimed, or was their faith a pure illusion? was he who, at the conclusion of that process, assumed more than prophetic authority a deluded fanatic, or did he in truth speak as no man ever yet had spoken? in a word, does this evolution imply revelation? That

is the question that forces itself upon the mind, and quite evidently our answer will depend upon our conception of the source and validity of faith in general.

As I attempted to show in the first of these lectures, faith can be defined as an inference from intuition to the effect that there is a purposive agent behind the phenomena of the world corresponding to the immediate sense of purpose in the individual conscience. Against that belief must be set the contrary inference, from observation, of a bare mechanical determinism. To the theorist under the domination of science the inference from intuition is a mere wish-belief, an ivory tower of refuge from the hard facts of life. To the sceptic, who regards theism and determinism alike as equally undemonstrable inferences from what we know, it would appear that the inference from intuition is at least as reasonable as the other. So much for the probabilities of reason. But there is this fact also to consider, that he who makes the venture of faith and endeavours so to live as to conform his will to what he believes is the will of God—that he who practises religion, with courage and in humility, becomes more and more convinced of some voice out of the infinite silence answering to the plea of his own heart. Faith appears to him less and less a bare conjecture from his own longing desire, a will to believe, more and more the response to a summons of compelling power. To this conviction the honest sceptic can only say, you may be right, but I know nothing about it.

And so, passing from the source of individual faith to the question of religion as a social habit, we may admit the impossibility of proving by coercive logic that it is anything more than a vaporous fancy born

of the timidity of the whole human race before the hard facts of existence; but there is something in the very universality of this phenomenon to give the sceptic pause. Everywhere and at all times, except for slight flurries of agnosticism, not a few men but all mankind, from the most primitive society to the most advanced stage of enlightenment, have been making the same inference of powers behind the visible world corresponding to the intuition of conscience. That inference may have led them into strange and even repulsive follies of superstition, yet always it is drawn from the same source. Whether it be the savage grovelling before a stone made awful to him by the supposed presence of mana, or a Phoenician mother flinging her child to the brazen arms of Moloch and the flames of devouring fire, or a cultivated Greek submitting himself to the rites of initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries,—always the worshipper has in mind the reality of a Power that is purposing to work him good or ill. Everywhere and always, except again for little temporary flurries of doubt, men have believed that by prayer and worship, by sacrifice whether as communion or gift, by ritual or magic, some response comes to them out of the other world, some answering grace of courage or comfort, some assurance of a *deus praesens*, a conviction of revelation, however inarticulate, reaching down to the outstretched hand of faith. Why religion should take such strange forms, why a God should reveal Himself so obscurely and intermittently, why faith should be left to grope in such dark byways and to lose itself so often in aerial fantasies or cruel perversions, is a riddle unsolved and insoluble, a mystery seeming to suggest a tragic rift somewhere in the dark backward

of fate between the divine and the human, some ultimate irrationality in the nature of things as they are. But to argue from this difficulty that no intimation of objective truth corresponds to the searching of faith from within, to brush aside the whole vast religious experience of the race as an illusion without foundation and a self-deception without warrant, to believe that mankind is the victim of a cosmic jest, that the universe is a machine whose only human expression is a sneer, and that all our frantic runnings to and fro to break through the brazen ramparts of the sky are like the beatings of a trapped animal against the bars of his cage,—that, I maintain, is a tax upon credulity beyond the demands of faith. Dogmatic infidelity of that stamp a genuine sceptic must find it hard to accept.

But how does all this bear upon the particular pretensions of Christianity? To such a question the attitude of the higher criticism in its heyday of youthful assurance was clear and unwavering. It can be found expressed, with all the glow of a kind of inverted substitute for faith, in Darmesteter's *Prophètes d'Israël*, from which I will quote two passages, one referring to the Old and the other to the New Testament.

By some accident [he says in the first passage], it happened that the cry of reason and conscience, even as we hear it today (*le cri de la raison et de la conscience moderne*), broke forth in the heart of certain unknown and sublime geniuses who have been called prophets. . . . The God of the Prophets is only human reason projected into the heavens.

And so Jesus [our scholar continues, passing from the prophets of the Old Testament to the supposed fulfiller of prophecy in the New],—and so Jesus, the poor god, betrayed before the cross and betrayed after it, “who so much wished the good and has done so much evil in the world,” Jesus will enter definitively into his epiphany only on that day when, in some remote village of Salzburg or Navarre, his last priest shall have said his last mass. Then indeed his word will come to life, without human gloss to

trouble it, the word of sweetness and sacrifice. . . . Then it will go directly, without admixture, from the soul that speaks it to the soul ever expectant, better understood by a humanity that no longer believes in him and that feels itself the better for having passed, for an instant, under the shadow of his cross.

Perhaps I owe an apology to my audience for quoting such a length of sticky sentimentalism; but it is significant. Darmesteter, a learned and, in his fashion, pious Jew, published his work, a notable work for the day, in 1892, and its tone is thoroughly characteristic of the sort of thing that Renan was making popular, and that pervaded the Liberal Theology of the age when these scholars left the lecture desk to mount the pulpit. The whole movement was an effort to make religion scientific by including it in the general scope of an evolutionary process determined by some inner law of chance and probability, and at the same time to retain its comfort of "sweetness and sacrifice." The prophets just happened as an accident, but they were sublime geniuses; Jesus was a poor creature imbecile and betrayed, but he will come into his epiphany when no one believes in him. There is a palpable sham about all this. To preach so watery a substitute for religion with simulated enthusiasm, to sanctify it as the expurgated spirit of faith or to suppose it had any living validity, was little better than overt fraud. We have learned that we must believe more or believe less.

Also it was bad scholarship. It sprang from the first fine frenzy of anthropological study, when the accumulating knowledge of kindred-seeming myths and ritual practices here, there, and everywhere opened the mind of scholars to the common ground of religious evolution. And from the confluent mass of vagaries and frustrations and even monstrosities in

this evolution, they promptly concluded that the whole business, whether it were the fetish-worship of the African bushman or the sacramentalism of the Christian, was on the same level, a mere fever of the brain born of ignorant fears, a riot of ignorance. The error of these pioneers was that they were so keen to detect resemblances but so wilfully blind to differences. Sooner or later a more dispassionately comparative view of the whole subject is bound to reckon with the radically different as well as with the radically common features of religion. And the particular point it will have to consider is this: a monotheistic current, as we have seen, runs under the surface of all religions and apparently is at the source of the whole ethical experience and otherworldly belief of mankind, yet in one place only has this current worked itself out historically; why should this be? Everywhere we see that faith can be explained as a transference of the moral sense known to us by intuition to belief in something similar at work in the world at large, yet only in one place do we find the purposive element, which is the very beginning and end of conscience, so clearly grasped as to dominate the whole course of religion. That is what I mean by saying that religion is essentially teleological, yet that nowhere else but in the Judaeo-Christian faith do the inner and outer facts of teleology correspond. There is no other religious phenomenon so challenging to thought, as in philosophy there is no other challenge like the Socratic teleology. To brush this distinction aside as a mere accident, won't do; to pass it by as insignificant won't do; it calls for a cause commensurate with its magnitude.

Here is a riddle lost for us apparently in the ultimate conditions of time and finite life; but we can put our finger on certain factors in the mysterious relation between the divine and the human which may seem to point at least to a solution. For one thing, whatever the cause may be, the Jews were conscious of faith as a wish-belief, and against all the casuistries of doubt persisted in the will to believe, clung to it ever the more tenaciously through calamity and defeat, as did no other people of the world. That is the haunting secret of the Psalms, where the whole music of devotion weaves itself about four or five constantly recurring words, which we translate, not always consistently, as "trust," "take refuge in," "wait upon," "hope."⁸

Our fathers trusted in thee;
 They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
 Trust in the Lord, and do good.
 Pour out your heart before him:
 God is a refuge for us.
 God is our refuge and strength,
 A very present help in trouble.
 Wait on the Lord,
 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart:
 Wait, I say, on the Lord.
 And now, Lord, what wait I for?
 My hope is in thee.
 Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us,
 According as we hope in thee.

These are words—trust, refuge, waiting, hope—that occur in the hymns of other peoples, and naturally, since they are of the very essence of human life; but nowhere else do they form so regular a refrain through a whole body of devotional writings, or are they so consciously the expression of the will to believe; no-

⁸ *Batach, chasah, qavah, yachal.*

where else does faith stand forth so openly as "the substance of things hoped for"; nowhere else is the evolutionary note of religion so manifestly involved in the conflict of voluntary belief with invading difficulties. For the climax of that drama we turn to the magnificent book of Job, centred about that uttermost cry of victorious confidence: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."⁴

Over against this unique tenacity of Israel's faith as a wish-belief expressing itself in an indomitable will-to-believe we have to set the correspondingly unique development of the content of belief, the fact that alone in Judaeo-Christianity the ideas of God and morality and redemption and cult, notwithstanding temporary aberrations and retrogressions, move straight on through the line of prophets to a convergence and culmination in the Messianic fulfilment of prophecy. That is to say, we have in the objective facts of history what might be described as the psychological experience of the individual writ large so as to be made visible to the eye. What the individual tells of himself, that the persistence of voluntary faith brings an ever growing assurance of the living reality of the object of his belief, we seem to see here actually occurring in the line of prophets among a peculiar people. This, I repeat, is no coercive demonstration of the unique truth of Christianity; but the honest sceptic will admit that the correspondence between the course of history and the very definition of teleology has a persuasive evidence which cannot be so easily disre-

⁴ It may be objected that these words of the Authorized Version do not render the precise meaning of the original, which as a matter of fact is itself open to critical question. But no suggested emendation of the text and no other translation present the whole dramatic theme of the dialogue with such concentrated accuracy.

garded as can the conviction of the individual believer. There are, as I attempted to show in our study of Plato, three indispensable elements united in the inference of teleology; an agent conscious of the intention to achieve some end, a moral law to which such an agent is responsible, some obscure difficulty or hindrance thwarting that end or delaying its attainment. And these would appear to be precisely the factors at work in the evolution of religion seen as a divine purpose of revelation thwarted among those peoples where faith never frees itself from the passions of the world, and as a slow time-process in the history of Judaeo-Christianity.

And there is a philosophic aspect of this truth, if truth we may take it to be, no less arresting than the historic. Not only does the appearance of a Jewish Messiah provide the *telos* to a long process of history, but in the Christianized dogma of the Incarnation that event is, beyond any other "myth," intrinsically teleological in so far as it answers to the inference of a divine purpose revealing itself progressively in the stratified phenomena of creation. This teleological note of the Incarnation was implicit in the immediate impression made by the personality of Christ upon his disciples, but becomes philosophically explicit in the doctrine of the Logos. For the meaning of that doctrine is simply this, that in the Word made flesh God, as St. Paul declared, "made known unto us the mystery of his will . . . according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus." Now, so far as our limited intelligence may be permitted to play upon the theme, the unfolding of the divine purpose of self-manifestation would seem to be in some such manner as follows.

We have first a revelation of the Logos through the inanimate world. And by revelation I mean here that the observed order and beauty of lifeless things is of such a sort that faith, if it will, may discover the activity of an intelligence creating and manipulating the hierarchy of these objects with some conscious design in view, analogous to the manner in which we, in our mortal needs, use the materials at our disposal for some end of our own. And looking so on the world at large we derive, or infer, these signs of purpose in an ascending scale from the inert clod of earth to the sublime and majestically moving stars. There is little apparent meaning in the stone at my feet; whereas the pattern of the sky, as Kant admitted and as the nineteenth Psalm long before him stated in nobler language, may become eloquent to us of the glory of God. But from one to the other, from the lowliest clod of earth to the utmost reach of the heavens, the scale of evidence is continuous.

Then comes a break in the continuity. The inanimate object appears to be an instrument of purpose for the use of some animate agent, and in no sense of the word for itself. There is no heart or mind in the blazing planet to benefit from its own beauty, there is in it no power of self-development and direction, any more than in the dullest fragment of matter in the street. But the animate creature has an end in and for itself. The seed develops into the perfect plant, the germ into the perfect animal. There is, as Aristotle would say, a soul in these things. As a consequence the suggestions of a divine purpose are clearer, seem to come to us more directly and intimately, from the animate than from the inanimate world. And, again, there is continuity in this higher realm of nature as

there was in the lower. From the amoeba, moving almost (but not quite) mechanically towards that which nourishes it and away from that which injures it, up to the lordliest beast of the field and forest, the scale of degree rises in unbroken ascent.

But then follows a second break. Though intention is inherent in plants and animals, it is still, for themselves, not purposive. Even in the highest animal it is so. The lion grows from the cub by some hidden potentiality, but he has no conscious aim in that natural growth. He hunts down his prey with intent, but he is conscious of no end beyond the satisfaction of an immediate need. It is just here that man rises above the lion in degree, and by a step which breaks the continuity of the scale. He has not only consciousness (which the lion may or may not possess, according as you define the term), but also conscience. He distinguishes between right and wrong, suffers remorse for wrong, is aware of responsibility and of a moral growth to be attained by his own volition. He is conscious of himself as a purposeful agent, and with this intuition there appears in him a new element which, again in Aristotelian terms, is supernatural as distinct from the natural; and with this dualism there enters a new factor into revelation. From the inanimate and animate realms of nature, I may *infer* a purposeful agent transcendent to the world by analogy with what I know of myself; though they themselves tell me nothing. But between man and man there is communication. Through language one man knows that his brothers have conscious purpose just as he himself has, and are drawing from it the same inference; and through this communication his faith in a larger purpose embracing all life seems to be authenticated.

From the clod of earth up to man we have thus an ascending ladder in the instruments of revelation, but with at least two gaps in the continuity which all the intense labour of evolutionary study, so intense as to be almost malignant, has not been able to abolish and shows not the slightest indication of ever being able to abolish.

Now there are three comments to make at this point. In the first place we do not directly observe, or at least are not aware of directly observing, a creative purposing will behind the world. Indeed if we seek to explain the vast apparent regularities of the universe from observation alone, they are more likely to strike us as the result of some blind law of adjustment within natural phenomena themselves, and we shall arrive at a thoroughly deterministic philosophy.

And secondly, it is to be remembered that, from the theistic point of view, the divine Logos is not *in and of* the world in the Stoic and pantheistic sense, but is transcendent. The Logos of God, if he speaks to us at all, does so not *from* the world, but *through* the world. He is in the world only as Shakespeare and Plato and Michelangelo may be said to be in their works. We have in the visible phenomena about us what Gregory Nazianzen calls so superbly not God Himself, but only the bare *gnôrismata* of His power, or, as the passage may be paraphrased: "God Himself we cannot know or see, but only His back parts and the indications of Him left behind." And this is true of man as well as of the lower creatures. Man has that which the rest of the (known) world has not; in his reason and conscience he possesses something which carries his thoughts up to the comprehension of a divine Logos, and he is thus capable of faith as the

rest of the world is not. But strictly speaking, the act of faith implies a relation between the divine in man and divinity as one of analogy, not of identity, and man's higher endowment should be called a logistic faculty rather than simply Logos. We may speak of being in God, but it is only by a loose and rather dangerous metaphor that we speak of God being in us. Man's reason and conscience may be divine, they are not the indwelling of divinity.

And a third comment would be this. If the Logos denotes purpose in any way analogous to our human purpose, it follows that we must think of God, however superhuman His power, however in His being He may transcend our understanding, as of one who achieves His end through some obstacle, or condition, or limitation. And this inference would seem to meet the facts of existence. I cannot believe that the law which conditions all life upon death, and which in the animal kingdom reveals itself in deliberate cruelty and conscious suffering, is the direct will of the Being to whom I attribute the joyous and beautiful aspects of creation. If my inference of a purposive Creator is coloured by my sense of order and beauty and righteousness; if, that is, it springs from the responsible and morally purposive side of my own nature, I must believe that God is good and wills good, and I must attribute the evil of the world to some other obscurely guessed factor that thwarts the full working of His will. Whether with Plato I should call this factor an aboriginal power of "unordered motion" or escape any positive definition by naming it "necessity," whether I should call it the "matter" of Aristotle, or the ineluctable condition of individualism as the Stoics thought of it, or the "evil impulse" of the Hebrews,

or an intrusion into the world from the voluntary sin of pride as the Christians define it—this I presume not to say. But everything about me, the very meaning of the word “purpose” as drawn from intuition of my own nature, tells me that there is something in the sum of existence besides the will of God, and beyond that patent fact I deem it folly to conjecture.

So far we have considered revelation as it might be conceived and admitted by any theist; it shows degrees of clarity and cogency, but from bottom to top it has its apparent initiation in the human faculty of inference. The question arises whether it has ever been anything more than this. In one way the question may be shelved by saying that the theories of revelation from without by the direct intervention of God and of revelation from within by human inference are not exclusive one of the other, since it may well be that the human faculty of inference is the means employed by God in revealing Himself through creation. But in the prophetic parts of the Old Testament we seem to catch hints of a more immediate operation of the Spirit of God upon the spirit of man, such indeed as may be discerned elsewhere among the great Gentile teachers of theism, but here in a manner so much less sporadic, so much more systematic, so much more organically related to the life of the people, so much more, as it were, forward-reaching, as to render the scripture of the Jews unique in the religious literature of the world. The very mark and seal of prophecy is the ever present suggestion that the experience of Israel was preparatory to, and propaedeutic of, a new form of revelation.

And such an event the Christian has always seen in the Incarnation. In the person of Jesus the ortho-

dox believer has thought he could recognize the Logos, not manifesting itself indirectly as in the realm of nature from the dull clod of earth up to the most highly organized animal through the vestiges of a purpose behind creation, nor as more persuasively guessed from the conscious and supernatural reason of man, but as an immediate presence capable of self-expression. It is not that Jesus had merely a clearer consciousness of a divine element in his being, a completer comprehension of the relation of the logistic faculty of man to the Logos of God, but that the Logos actually abode in his human nature in such wise that besides being man he was God. How this union of the two natures could be, the Christian, if he be wise, does not venture to say; it is analogous to the duality of the supernatural and the natural in man, but it is different also in being the duality of divinity and humanity. And this, and properly understood no more than this, the much castigated Definition of Nicea and Chalcedon, in its hard, precise, uncircumventible terms, would defend. Thus the revelation of God in Christ is analogous to the revelation through nature and man, but unique in kind as well as in degree. In the New Testament the Christian reads a record of love behind the purpose of creation, not as indicated by symbols and vestiges which must be disentangled from the disturbing signs of hatred, nor even as guessed by the seers of the Old Testament from the providential history of Israel, but directly and convincingly displayed in the gift of the Creator's only Son. In the summons "Come unto me" the Christian hears that which no prophet or son of a prophet would dare utter of himself, yet which seems to throw a sudden illumination back over all the

reaches of prophecy. And in the tragic end of the Incarnation he descries the thwarting of purpose, hitherto inferred from the remnant of cosmic disorder and from the cruelty of life, now carried up visibly to the purposive agent himself. Here is the last and terrible mystery of being. Before it we can only bow in awed humility. Reason does not grasp it; all our instincts cry out against it; but there it is. Somehow love, even the divine love, can effect its ultimate purpose only by paying the price of self-surrender and voluntary suffering. Everything of Christian faith I can find adumbrated in the other great theistic religions of the world and in Plato, everything except this. Here, we have warrant to believe, something has been added to revelation which could not be reached by human inference; a truth, which might be guessed indeed from Deutero-Isaiah, has broken suddenly as a miraculous fact into the smooth current of history.

The clarity and cogency of revelation thus fall into a scale determined by the instrument through which it is made; and that scale is *not continuous* but interrupted at least at three points in the ascending passage from inanimate to animate nature, from animal to man, and from the dualism of man to the dualism of the God-man. But when we turn from the objective act of revelation to the subjective response in the human soul we see an ascent running parallel indeed to the scale of instruments, but different from that scale in being *continuous*. From the faith that accepts the inference of purpose in the clod of earth up and on to the faith that assents to the self-revelation of purpose in the Word made flesh there is no break, no distinction in kind, but an unbroken ascent by degrees. Whatever the part of grace may be, and how-

ever it may operate differently through different channels, there is one corresponding act of faith, great faith or little faith, confused or clear, but still one faith.

All of which brings us to a practical question of the utmost importance. Assuming that Christianity is the *telos* of a particular cycle of history in the past, must we accept it as a *telos* absolutely, or shall we regard it as the beginning of a new period of evolution? Is the dogma of the Incarnate Word a finality, or does it point to a higher truth, just as prophecy pointed forward to it? Did the development of religion reach its climax with the advent of Jesus, or "look we for another?" Here no doubt it behooves us to move cautiously, but it seems to me that the right answer to such a question is bound up with the distinction between the discontinuity of revelation and the continuity of faith inherent in the doctrine of the Logos. Considering the objective means whereby God makes known His nature and will, I for one simply cannot conceive a further step in the scale of revelation beyond the historic event of the Word made flesh. If our knowledge of God is a developing assurance that the inference from intuition is true, and that the world is not wholly as it appears to observation a huge unmeaning fatality but at once conceals and reveals a Power corresponding to our own purposive conscience, then I cannot imagine a further step in the hierarchical conjunction of spirit and matter than the condescending act of the Creator in entering personally into His creation and in being born as man among men. And so of morality. If morality be the endeavour of man to conform his will to the will of heaven and to assimilate his purpose to what he may

grasp of the divine purpose, I see not where we are to look for principles of conduct more fundamental than the purity and humility and love exemplified in the life of Jesus and enforced upon his disciples by precept. Again, if redemption of the soul from the bondage of evil is the beneficent aspect of God's design for the individual, as the redemption of Israel was the manifestation of His plan in history, in what shall we expect a larger payment of the exacted price than in the sacrifice symbolized by the figure of the Cross? Shall we await something more costly than the agony of Gethsemane and on Calvary? And, lastly, whither shall we look for a form of worship richer in significance than the cult of the Eucharist instituted by Christ Himself as a memorial and mystic representation of the whole drama of the Incarnation? Unless we hold to the possibility of direct intervention outside of those conditions which hitherto have determined the interaction of the divine and the human, unless we look for some vast catastrophic overthrow of Necessity, religion must rest on this as a fact, that in the historic event recorded in the New Testament the ascending scale of revelation reached its climax. It may be that the Second Coming of the Lord and the establishment of his Kingdom will be just such a rending away of the veils of nature through which the Word has always spoken to faith; but even so we may believe that nothing will be changed in the significance of the Incarnation as the *telos* of prophecy.

But when we turn to the subjective side of religion, there is a different story to tell. There is no reason to suppose that faith may not grow from strength to strength, or that knowledge may not deepen from age to age. The fact of revelation is there, unchanged,

final, complete; but this does not preclude the possibility, even the probability, of an ever clearer perception of the meaning of the Incarnation, of an ever wider and truer application of the moral law to the relations of man to man and of man to God, in purity and humility and love, of an ever deeper penetration into the end of redemption, of an ever fuller participation in the mystery of worship and sacrifice. Here would enter the function of the Church. As the Incarnation came in response to the faith of a separate nation, so we may suppose the Parousia and the realization of the Messianic Kingdom depend on the fidelity of the Church as a separate people within the world.

VIII

THE GIFT OF HOPE

TO BEGIN the study of religion from a professedly sceptical point of view and to end with the dogma of the Incarnation, may seem, as they say over the water, a bit thick. I am sure that a good many of my hearers have been protesting to themselves that, whatever the pretended approach may have been, scepticism was very soon forgotten along the way. And so I am going to ask you to retrace with me the steps by which we arrived at a conclusion so remote in appearance from our beginning.

What is meant by the sceptical approach to religion? What is this scepticism that can be manipulated, seemingly by some sleight of hand, into faith? Well, in the simplest terms I would repeat my definition of the sceptic as one who perceives clearly a distinction between fact and theory, and, in the language of old Socrates, has planted himself firmly on the foundation of all wisdom—the knowing when he knows and when he does not know. Now the facts that he knows, or part of them at least, are these: we have a number of sensations which tell us we are living in a surrounding world of objects and persons; and to the sceptic these facts stop just there. He has a sensation, or a collected group of sensations, which he calls this chair, or this tree, or this horse, or this man. He will

of course be puzzled by this limitation of his experience, and at the first, being naturally of an inquisitive turn of mind, he will strive to discover what lies behind these perceptions. But sooner or later, according to the intensity and honesty of his search, he will learn that all such attempts lead only to deeper perplexity. Such inquiries belong to the branch of philosophy called epistemology, and he learns by sad disappointments that of all the futilities of the human brain the endeavours to know how we know are about the most futile. Above all he is scornful of such idealistic theories as would try to convince him that there is really nothing at all behind these seeming perceptions, but only some subjective rigmarole going on in his own mind or in some other mind. He knows that no amount of fine-spun theorizing can deprive him of the sense that he is living in a world of objective things which in some way—exactly how, it is idle to inquire—are affecting him and correspond with his affections.

Furthermore, the sceptic does not question or reject the proper exercise of reason any more than he questions or rejects the immediate affections as such. He knows as a simple fact that his perceptions arrange themselves in groups by similarities and dissimilarities and by repeated successions. Reason to the sceptic is primarily the faculty by which he classifies these similarities and successions, and thereby adjusts his life practically to the world as it touches and embraces him. Nor is there any ground of hostility between scepticism and science. To the sceptic the steam engine and the aeroplane, the telephone and the wireless, the achievements of the physical and biological laboratories, are facts as they are to any one else, and to

him the processes of reason by which such results have been reached are as valid as to another man. But it is another guess when he comes to the philosophy, more properly a metaphysic, that, in the name of science uses the instrument of reason to probe into the ultimate mystery of causation. From the time of Thales to the very present the minds of half-thinking men have been captivated by a succession of such theories, which may differ in method but come to the same end. To one who looks below the surface it matters little whether he is asked to believe that this world of our experience has developed of itself from a lawless concourse of atoms or from a self-determined movement within a continuum, whether the gross elements or some abstraction of unity is held to be the sufficient source of the world in its manifold actuality, whether the series of changes is haphazard or preestablished by the nature of the source or appear as the incalculable pushing-forward into the non-existent, or are sloughed off by some pterodactylic mathematical equations in their dance through the inane,—these philosophies are all alike in this, that they set up a thousand-armed and thousand-headed idol of Necessity at the heart of the universe. Now the sceptic reads and hears of these theories as they hustle one another about in the brains of professional philosophers, and he wonders. He does not assert that any one of them may not be true; he is ready to admit that possibly they are all true, just as the cats that are said to scratch one another at Kilkenny are all cats; he cannot disprove that the world is a product of an ancient rape of probability upon chance, or that space is a sphere unlimited but finite; he is only amazed that any one who has the barest acquaintance with the

history of thought from Thales to Kant and from Pythagoras to Einstein should take any of these metaphysical inventions seriously, however he may be amused by them. For he perceives that one and all they are spun from the barest thinnest threads of conjecture; that one and all they are not in the region of knowledge, not facts or the rational manipulation of facts, but unverifiable inference from facts. Between veritable science and these balloons inflated by the gaseous products of hypothesis he perceives a huge gap. Any inference from what is observed to a theory of the universe may be true, as any guess may be, but reason is absolutely incompetent to prove its truth. That is what the sceptic means by saying that we are intellectually impotent.

Do not suppose that this portrait of the sceptic is an invention of mine. Every statement I have made, barring of course the modern instances, can be duplicated from the works of that Sextus Empiricus, who summed up the contentions of the sceptical school, technically and properly so called, from the age of Pyrrho, about three hundred B.C., over a period of some five hundred years. And I am prepared to say in sober reflection that, though Sextus himself may have little originality, his summary of the long contest with the dogmatists is pretty nearly the weightiest document we have of pure analytical thinking. The odd thing is that probably the works of Sextus will barely be mentioned, if mentioned at all, this whole year in any course of philosophy given in any of our universities.

The sceptic, then, is one who, having explored the right function and the limits of reason, holds his judgement in suspense when pestered with these theo-

ries of mechanical determinism or quasi-spiritual necessitarianism. But there is something else that increases for him the improbability of any one or all of these systems. He perceives as a fact that there is a religious way of looking at the world quite different from the scientific, and that these rationalists of necessity, though they have trod on one another's heels in unbroken succession, are a minute minority of mankind. Now religions, or superstitions if you will, appear to take on as many aspects as did old Proteus of the sea; but the sceptic who looks below the surface is startled to discover that they are based on a single clear principle, and on a principle utterly at variance with the whole range of rationalism; they all agree in imagining certain powers behind, or within, the mechanism of phenomena which are not at all mechanical, but free agents swayed by the persuasions of prayer and sacrifice and symbolic rites. These powers behind the scene are in this respect anthropomorphic, or at least more or less like what man instinctively feels himself to be. They are all purposive, at least to this extent that they have an inclination to help or injure man in accordance with their good or ill will. They are all controlling things, sporadically or continuously, to some end. Religion always, whether vaguely or definitely, partially or completely, points to a teleological conception of the world, as contrasted with any form of necessitarianism.

This universality of the religious attitude, with its fundamental unity behind all the variations of belief, is a fact that must arrest the attention of any open mind; and the sceptic by definition is one who keeps his mind alert to any new impressions, and indeed the word sceptic implies primarily a critic, as well as a

mere doubter. So it is that he will look warily into this phenomenon of religion to see what has been going on. And his investigation will lead to striking results. He observes that everywhere with the advance in civilization and self-knowledge these popular superstitions regularly develop towards a clearer and clearer monotheism. But here history has a surprise for him. Just when a religion seems ready to pass on to its natural consummation, something happens; everywhere it falls back into a sort of primitive animism, or daemonism, or evaporates into a vague metaphysical mist of pantheism in which any notion of a divine purpose or any remnant of teleology is lost from sight like a balloon in the clouds,—everywhere except among one singular people. He sees that the annals of Israel stand out in challenging isolation just for the reason that here alone, through manifold back-slidings, the various factors of religion do move on to a genuine and thoroughly purged monotheism. This completed historic evolution is mainly the work of the prophets from Moses to the sublime visionary whom we designate as the Deutero-Isaiah; and the sceptic is bound to be struck by the fact that these leaders of the religious evolution are perfectly aware of the singularity of what is happening, and that one and all they pretend to speak not by virtue of their own insight but as interpreters of revealed truth.

And then comes an even more startling event. Just when the Jewish people also seem to have lost their hold and to be lapsing into the usual extravagances, there is born among them one who claims to be not a prophet, but he for whom the prophets were looking, one who pretends to be not an instrument of revelation, but himself the revealer and himself the truth.

This, the sceptic admits, is an astounding trick of history, however it be regarded; and amazement at this historic figure is enhanced by the fact that within a few years of the apparent collapse of his pretensions his disciples were proclaiming a doctrine of his life and death which turned his apparent failure into a drama of redemption divinely purposed from the beginning of time. It is surpassing strange. And at this point the sceptic is likely to remember that of all the secular philosophies one only, but the most famous, that of Socrates and Plato, after much groping along the way arrived at a conclusion, not indeed identical with the goal of religious evolution, but tolerant of what purports to have come by revelation. As the wiser theologians saw, and admitted, Plato's dualistic allegory of creation laid the basis of a teleology which might be taken as a secular confirmation of the divine purpose revealing itself in the Word made flesh.

Such is the dilemma of rationalism and religion that meets the inquiring sceptic; and the question is how he will respond to these two contrary appeals to his intelligence. There can be, as we have seen, little doubt about the attitude he will adopt towards the long thin line of philosophies which all agree in setting up the Idol of Necessity and are all non-teleological or at the least pseudo-teleological. He will take a certain scholarly interest in analysing the innumerable ramifications from the root planted in ancient times by Thales. He will see through their fascination, understanding how they hold men by the power of flattery. For there is something soothing to human vanity in the thought that the worker in the laboratory, with his little apparatus of test-tubes and chemicals, or the master of this or that machine, or the

adroit manipulator of logical abstractions, is dealing with the ultimate forces of life and being. It would so simplify our comprehension of the visible world in which we are set to play our parts if reason were a key to unlock all its mysteries instead of an instrument of practical utility. All this the sceptic will understand; but he will know too that the dignity of rational demonstration claimed by this or that particular theory is a pure illusion. He may be entertained by such presumptions, but in the end he will not take them much more seriously than he does the ingenuity of those who solace themselves over the intricacies of the day's cross-word puzzle.

But what of the contrary appeal of religion? Well, I am sure of one thing. If he retains any vestige of scepticism he will perceive the hollowness of those bastard philosophies, of the Spinozistic and Kantian type, which take up the great words of religion—God, immortality, duty, righteousness, purpose—and then by a trick of legerdemain convert them before your eyes into bloodless abstractions of reason quite indistinguishable from the Absolute of the necessitarians. For a philosophy which seeks to bolster up belief in God by proving that there must of necessity be something than which nothing can be greater; or that defines the God of worship as *actus purus*, that is as Absolute Being which acts without suffering any change within itself; for a metaphysic that seeks religious peace in the intellectual love of a something as inhumanly logical as a triangle, or that strips conscience of any relation to human experience; for a word-play, to take a more modern instance, that talks about a God who will satisfy man's longing for justification and then defines Him as the principle consti-

tuting the concreteness of things,—for these thumb-rigging games in which metaphysics suddenly appears where you expect religion, and religion where you expect metaphysics, for these any true sceptic, I am sure, will feel nothing but a contempt bordering on detestation. He sees that the reality behind their masque of spiritual pretensions is the hard face of mechanical determinism.

There remains, then, as the only alternative to the line of secular philosophies that vivid concrete phenomenon of history that is called religion. And what shall the sceptic say to this? One thing quite definitely. Looking at religion from the outside, he will say that the whole range of beliefs can be explained as pure undemonstrable inference, exactly as the opposed philosophies were explained, only with this obvious difference: religion is not an inference from what is outwardly observed or from the mechanism of reason, but a projection into the void, so to speak, of his own feeling of personal freedom, responsibility, and purpose. And the sceptic will go a step further: discerning the real source, however disguised, of the secular philosophies, and perceiving that Christianity alone of religions corresponds with the final data of self-knowledge, he will say that the hard real duel, when the fencing with words has been finished, lies between that frank materialistic mechanism, which the metaphysicians are so keen to disguise, and the historic teleology of the Logos doctrine to which the Platonic philosophy may be regarded as a sort of preparation, or propaedeutic. Between these two he will choose; between them he must choose. And if you ask why the need of choosing at all, I would give this reason, with this reservation. There is a class of men, not a

small class I admit, upon whom the compulsion of choice does in fact seem not to fall. I see and know such men. They may be living perfectly respectable lives; they may be estimable citizens, even distinguished for scholarship or attainment in the arts. They go about their daily business, or pursue the gratification of their successive desires, content with the occupation of the hour, displaying what looks like a workable sort of cheerfulness, having apparently no vexatious curiosity as to what it all means, and no worrying anxiety over their own final destination. They appear never to have felt the stinging discontent of impermanence. I say to myself that the equanimity of such men must be owing to some deficiency of that which distinguishes man as man; but, frankly, I just do not understand them, and I am simply leaving them out of my reckoning. That reservation I make. But these men, I insist, are not sceptics. The sceptic is one whose faculties are alert, and who is therefore bound to feel the force of the dilemma confronting him. Now mark. He may see, as sceptic he will see, that the truth of neither issue can be demonstrated by any sort of coercive logic, and he may therefore hold his judgement in suspense and refuse to commit himself. He may do this intellectually, and indeed such would seem to be the natural position of the sceptic. But—and note this—by that very act of intellectual indecision, he knows that he has made a practical decision and has committed himself in effect to the party of those who decide dogmatically against religion. The reason for this lies in the fact that secular philosophy imposes no obligation of living in a particular manner, whereas religious belief, or faith, does impose such an obligation. Secular philosophy of this

or that brand may inculcate one style of life as better than another and may thus have its ethics, but it does not hold man responsible to a tribunal, so to speak, outside of this life, whereas that precisely is what religion does. The teleology of faith looks to a Judge whose writs run beyond this circle of mortal years and whose execution of righteousness is a purpose that holds all time in fee.

Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
And perfect witness of all judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.

I am not yet asking whether the myth, let us call it, of religion is true or false, whether this Judge sitting in the courts of eternity is an actual being or a fantastic projection of man's intuitive sense of responsibility into the heavens, as it were a greater than man to whom he is responsible. I am stating the simple fact that faith does not end with a decision of the brain, is not a mere theorem of the schools, but by its very nature makes demands upon conduct and character. In face of these demands the dogmatist who denies the validity of faith and the sceptic who holds his judgement in suspense are practically at one in so far as both without distinction will in their lives ignore an authority they do not recognize. And this the clear-eyed sceptic will see. He knows that the really important question for him is not whether he shall accept this or that conclusion of rationalism as demonstrated or reject them all as illusions of the reasoning faculty, but whether or not he shall decline, on either

dogmatic or sceptical grounds, to shape his living to a teleological theism

What is there then to move the sceptic, who, seeing the issue, sees also that neither side can lay claim to rational demonstration,—what motive has he to abandon his comfortable acquiescence in the results of intellectual indecision and to bother himself into acceptance of a faith that makes such demands upon him? It is, I believe, because these demands seem but an echo of that within himself which is deeper than reason and more fundamental to his nature as man. The relative universality, if I may use such a phrase, of religion in comparison with the straggling line of philosophic adherence indicates some instinctive need of humanity for these otherworldly powers. To the sceptic who begins to feel the urgency of such appeals the dogmatist of philosophy will say, and indeed does say very loudly, that faith by your own admission is a wish-belief and a refuge from thinking. You are afraid to face the obvious fact that things are as they are because they could not be otherwise; at least since we have no visible evidence of a God or of immortality or of a divine purpose in a world where everything visible points to an unmalleable necessity, therefore it is the part of a wise and strong man to accept things as they are without whining and without running for refuge to dreams of a spiritual utopia. To all which the sceptic may very well reply that the anti-religious dogmatist is frightfully sure of his facts; it may be true that faith is a wish-belief, but how is the dogmatist, however he may usurp the title of scepticism, so certain that because we wish to believe in something, therefore the object of such belief cannot be a reality? Indeed, would it not be a fair retort to ask whether his

antagonism is not at bottom merely : another and more ignoble sort of wish-belief, to which he is succumbing either because he is ashamed to acknowledge his inability to grasp the promises of faith, or because he is annoyed by the demands of faith upon his conduct of life? So the matter stands. The sceptic who after a while is rather bored by the pretensions of a philosophy flaunting itself in the holiday attire of science, and by the antics of an epistemology forever chasing itself in a squirrel-wheel that revolves without moving an inch forwards,—the sceptic, who has felt the sting of impermanence, is worried by an insistent doubt: suppose the very horror of a world devoid of anything answering to human purpose is a reason of the heart deeper than any reason of the brain; suppose the very persistence of man's wish-belief in such an answering purpose is a kind of super-rational argument for the validity of faith? What then? Will not the suspicion inevitably arise that indifference to religion may be the result of intellectual timidity? And suppose that the amazing correspondence of the Christian dogma of the Word with this wish-believing out of the depths of intuition is a signal that here the groping of faith has found its goal in the truth. What then?

We read and hear much about love as the law of Christianity, and undoubtedly that is the letter of the law. Yet I venture to ask whether the ease with which the command of love may be turned into a sickly and undiscriminating sort of sentiment has not done as much as anything else to maintain the sceptic in his attitude of hesitation. Certainly nothing in Christianity has been more subject to perversion or has led to more loose thinking, than the command to love one's

neighbour as one's self. But this is to be remembered, that after all love is a command, it is not the gift of faith; and that in particular the supreme gift of Christianity to mankind is not love, but hope.

Now in saying this I do not mean to imply that hope is a radically new gift brought into religion; that would be to sever Christianity from the wide experience of the race and to throw doubt upon the authenticity of its message. From the beginning hope has been a factor in the power of faith. It was because the savage expected some return for his devotion that he treated with awful respect the fetish in which he felt the presence of mana, or went through the symbolic rites that were to produce rain or a fruitful harvest, or sacrificed to the totemistic god of his clan. These aspects of hope are not lost in the Judaeo-Christian development of religion, but they are broadened and deepened and at the same time unified into a philosophy of life as a whole. And this change can be observed from several points of view.

Not long ago scholars were dismayed by Oswald Spengler's book on *The Decline of the West*, in which the author, to quote from a contemporary review, "surveys man's cosmic march, analyses social classes, . . . challenges the economic interpretation of history, and appraises religion and religions, only to find them all, in the culture of the West, running fast to decay under the impetus of civilization." Spengler's thesis was subject to a good deal of criticism, and it was easy to show that his passion for generalization often led him into errors of detail; but there was that in his presentation of the recurrent tragedy of history that caught the imagination and set men to thinking. Whatever his explanations, there is truth in his story of the

rise of one great civilization after another, their expansion and pride, their conceit of durability,

*Dum Capitolum
Scendet cum tacita virgine pontifex,*

and then their swift and ignoble collapse. The road of history is like the pioneer route through our desert lands, where in the old days the traveller beheld at intervals the skeletons of beaten men and the moulderling remains of caravans that had started out to reach an Eldorado of the West, and had perished on the way from starvation or disease or the ambush of enemies. To the reader who comes to history with a mind swayed by secular philosophy the record of the past is a dark and hideous scroll, wherein it is hard to say whether the more prominent lesson is man's folly and cruelty or Fate's mocking disregard of his virtues. There would seem to be only one relief, to dismiss it as a jest, a tale of sound and fury, but signifying nothing. And then perhaps one thinks of the ancient Hebrews and of the assurance of their prophets that above all the blindness of men and the apparent pranks of fatality rode the purpose of Jehovah, the great Ruler who was preserving His people almost against their will and leading them on, over the dust of fallen empires, to be the redemption of the world.

Have you ever thought of this, that the prophets of Israel were the first interpreters of history to grasp clearly the notion of a divine purpose manifesting itself in the destiny of nations, and that it was this theory of history that enabled them to cling, even desperately, through all the shocks of national apostacy and defeat, to a hope in the final triumph of Jehovah. And if their people too at the last met the greater light with closed eyes, and refused to recognize the proph-

esied *telos* when it actually appeared, yet there came out of them one who renewed the faith by announcing himself Lord of a Kingdom against which the gates of hell should not prevail. Historically teleology is hope in the final victory of the divine will over the wandering and recalcitrant wills of mankind; and history would seem to teach that, if there is any hope for these present days of black despondency it is to be sought not in the exploded idea of mechanical progress but in the waiting hope of faith.

And parallel with these events of history so appearing as the outer effect of the waxing and waning of religious hope the sceptic will be struck by the psychological aspect of the matter. At the beginning the hope of religion is connected with some specific thing or state; it is the promise of victory over a particular enemy, an access of courage and strength, a special form of prosperity,—these are what the primitive man hopes to attain by religious observances. With time comes the trust in a more clearly and personally conceived tribal deity, and gradually this trust assumes more and more value in itself. It is not only that Jehovah, for instance, if properly served is able to bring victory and welfare, but the very act of trusting in Jehovah takes on significance as a good in itself for the trusting soul itself. Thus from what God can give hope is centred more and more upon the desire that the giver will make himself known, will let the light of his countenance shine upon his servant. It begins to appear that deep-set in the heart of man is a craving to know that God is and what He is. Nor is it hard to understand why this should be. One thing life teaches, one sure lesson comes with the very act of living: that which the visible world can bestow always ends in

disappointment. In the very nature of things, because of their transience and the law of ceaseless change, because of their externality to the soul that desires them, there is that which can never satisfy, never bring content, never pacify the thronging passions. This is not a theory, but a fact; it is what all men, at least in moments of reflection, know beyond a peradventure. And so it is that behind all the rites and sacrifices directed to this or that wordly benefit, men have been believing in the powers of a divinity whose will alters not with alterations, and in whose governance there abides a steady unchanging purpose to bring order out of chaos, and continuity out of the impermanent. Yet always with that belief men have been troubled by the invisibility and intangibility of that in which they believed, and have been tormented by the desire to see and touch the object of their faith, to break through the wall that separates them from the unseen. And then as the spirit of inquiry grows and they reflect on the long frustrations of hope, they begin to ask why it should be that such a wall exists. What is it that so divides the divine from the human that the one should be as powerless to make itself known as the other is to know? Why is it that the voice from beyond should reach the world as if from a vast distance? Why are the supposed oracles so obscure and even contradictory? That is a problem that worried Plutarch in his reflective leisure at Chaeroneia, and that since then has never ceased to haunt the human mind.

And then into this cloud of doubt enters the thrust of Christian faith, which not only recognizes the difficulties of revelation but makes them the foundation of its creed. For just this is the meaning of the dogma

of the Incarnation, that the imperfection of the utterances of the divine in oracle and prophecy *through man* was preparing the human mind for the astounding fact that to make itself known the divine had to personify itself as man and so speak *in man*. It is almost as if the difficulties in the way of religion were on the side of God rather than on the side of humanity.

All this the sceptic sees as a fact of history : these wandering hopes that man is not imprisoned in an inescapable cage of physical Necessity, that our little and vexed life is not rounded with a sleep, that our cry for justice and happiness is not mocked by the silence of a world which has no tongue or speech, that there is a purpose somewhere, somehow, working through the seeming maze of fatality or chance, that the riddle of existence has an answer and the universe a meaning—the sceptic perceives that these wandering and elsewhere vanishing hopes come to a focus in the one enduring hope of Christianity. He sees that hope is the spur and the solace of humanity, and that, where hope fails, men, whether in the mass or in the individual, sink into frivolity or apathy or despair. He sees that the theory of evolution as a bare mechanical progress, moving on like the car of Juggernaut with a trail of deluded and crushed worshippers in its wake, is no better than a hideous lie if it pretends to offer a substitute for the hope of the individual heart. He sees that the terrible inscription which Dante wrote over the gate of hell,

All hope abandon, ye who enter here,

should of better right be set up as the motto of necessitarian philosophies. But true to the principle of scepticism, he admits that hope is not knowledge, that

we hope only because we do not know, and that there is no authority in the faculty of reason or in the coercion of logic to determine whether hope be a truth or an illusion. He recalls the scene in the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, in which the divine champion of humanity against "the will of Destiny" and "the irresistible might of Necessity" is lacerated on the rock because through his machinations "men have ceased to live with the fear of death before their eyes." And then come the words of Prometheus when asked by the Chorus what cure he had found for this affliction of mortality :

Blind hopes I made to dwell in men.

And with that scene, which is as it were the tragic conclusion of reflection among the people of Greece, the sceptic remembers the ringing changes upon the word hope in the New Testament, with their climax in the great text: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Blind hopes or faith, Prometheus on his rock or the Lord Jesus on his cross, to hope or not to hope, these are the alternatives between which the sceptic sees that reason of herself is helpless to decide, yet between which he, the sceptic, sees that he is bound to choose. For you cannot escape between hoping or not hoping; the refusal to choose is in act not to hope. Before these final decisions we are intellectually impotent.

If the reasoning intellect were all, the sceptic would be in a bad way. But by its very nature hope is an appeal to the emotions and the imagination more than to the thinking faculty. There is here something over which a good deal of confusion reigns. We often talk of the irreligion of today as chiefly caused by intellectual doubt following upon increase of knowledge.

Such a view, I am sure, is erroneous. Not one atom of knowledge has been acquired in all these centuries which in any essential point alters the situation as it stood between the Ionic philosophies originating with Thales on the one side and the revolt of Socrates on the other side. The question is precisely the same: it is between some form of necessitarianism—and the dispute among the various philosophies based on that principle is negligible, whether they rest in pure materialism or seek to evade detection in the altitudes of idealistic absolutism—it is between any form of necessitarianism and a teleological view of the world. That issue cannot be decided by pure reasoning, nor is the present inclination towards irreligion caused by increase of knowledge. It springs from an enfeebling of the emotions and a paralysis of what may be called the spiritual imagination. We have been made callous by the business of the world and have been habituated to the use of machinery. That restless longing of the heart for that which the world cannot give, the discontent which the whirring wheels of machinery cannot appease, that reaching out after the invisible things of the spirit and for that which will not pass away, that hunger of hope out of which springs the wish-belief in a God who rules aloft by the law of the spirit and in the end will bring order and righteousness out of this seeming chaos—it is this that has grown dull, and we trudge on through the occupations of the day, passing like hirelings from one task to another, almost though never quite content with the flowing shadows of mutability, asking at the most for comfort and a little space of security, with only a flickering sense of the tragedy of life if this life be all, with no strong up-welling emotions, almost without feeling. And

with this deadening of the emotions, whether as cause or effect it matters not, comes a relaxation of the imagination; we have lost the power of making real to ourselves those otherworldly things, whether they indeed be real or not, which the eye cannot see and the flesh does not suffer or enjoy.

So it is that the sceptic finds himself drawn in the end to make a decision not on the authority of pure reason, but as he is swayed by other faculties. If he has succumbed to the pressure of the present and so, drifting inertly with the tide, has lost the power to feel deeply and imagine strongly, he will just put aside the upsurging claims of religion as a light matter, and by failing to decide for them will have decided against them. On the contrary, if his emotions are stirring and his imagination active, he will be vexed by an ever recurrent doubt: suppose the inference of faith, which he can neither prove nor disprove, be true; suppose the hope of religion, coming to a head in the dogma of the Word made flesh, be not a deception but a reaching forth towards that which really happened—what then? Ah, but you may say, the agnostic certainly will say: How can the genuine sceptic start on the way of believing, or pretend honestly to believe, that to which he is driven by the emotions and the imagination, and how can he submit himself and his will to that which can never be verified by the intellect and so can never be known?

Be sure the sceptic will have thought of that; be sure this last question of all shall have come to him, palsying his will and holding him back at the threshold of faith. And then, if he be a true sceptic, an inquirer, that is, and not a dogmatist disguised as an agnostic, he will be struck by the fact that those who before

have crossed the threshold declare that the hope of religion, if followed bravely, brings a strange assurance of satisfaction, that faith, if it be of the heart and not of the lips merely, does by some inner miracle pass into knowledge. These things the sceptic will hear, and true to his character he will doubt. He will even turn from much of the religious patter heard from the pulpit and in private with something like irritation. It is so easy to talk about the love of God, and about spiritual values, the joyous freedom of surrender, and the other *clichés* of the preacher; and then observing the professing Christians in actual life, he will find very often that for all their profession they live much as do other men, filled with petty jealousies and ignoble passions and unlovely egotism. And he will ask himself whether an other-worldly belief which leaves its votaries plodding in the sticky ways of this world can be anything more than a fraud. And so, turning from the commonplace about him, he will perhaps read of the great mystics of history, and will be impressed at first; but I think if he pursues his inquiry he will come to doubt, not so much the facts of which he reads, but the explanation of the facts. He will come to ask whether these ecstatic moments of divine absorption cannot be explained on other grounds than those given by the mystics themselves, whether these phenomena of objective spiritual experience so-called cannot be accounted for quite plausibly as purely subjective and psychological, whether this craving for complete and absolute knowledge is not a vain rebellion against the inexorable law of our being that we are intellectually impotent and morally responsible. And a certain distaste may well spring up in his mind for what may be after all the

prôton pseudos, the final lie in the soul, and with that doubt an aversion for the morbid character mysticism produces.

All this the sceptic will discover. Yet that appeal to his will and emotions cannot be utterly hushed, nor that hope for a peace not of this world utterly quenched. And still looking, and reading, and asking, he will meet those or hear of those, however few in number, who have that peace, and a power from that peace, and a something glorious within which can be felt though not defined. You cannot get away from it ; these souls have been and are in the world, recognized Saints it may be, or men and women who make no boast themselves and of whom no boast is made, who profess to know and whose lives profess for them even more loudly that they do know. And he is fortunate above other men who has met one such whether it be a father or a mother or a friend. It is not a knowledge that can be demonstrated by logic, it is not a knowledge that can be conveyed to others against their will, nor is it akin to the mystic's immediate vision of, or union with, God. But it is a certainty of being in the right way, a pragmatic assurance that faith is pointing towards reality, a gift of divine hope. As such it is admittedly individual and private, and to be won must be wooed in secret ways ; but here and there it shines out with a great and flashing beauty, like a light set upon a high place above the stormy or tranquil waters where we voyage. And the sceptic will say : Is the beacon for me, is my haven there, in the harbour under that light may I come to my journey's end ?

To the agnostic fixed in his infidelity faith is a wish-belief, the true sceptic will rather call it hope ;

and hope is the summons to a great adventure. He will recall the words of Professor Whitehead: "Without adventure civilization is in full decay. . . . The great achievements of the past were the adventures of the past. . . . Only the adventurous can understand the greatness of the past." And he will ask whether the troubles of our present civilization are not due to just this: the loss of hope and with that loss a sort of craven timidity before the high spiritual adventure that we call religion. And for his own part he will begin to suspect that the suspense of judgement on which as a sceptic he has prided himself is not so much a clear perception of the limitations of reason as a sort of cowardly shrinking from the summons to push out into the vast unknown, if by chance he may find thus a knowledge beyond his present reckoning. Faith is the great adventure. That is a definition which ought to stir a man out of his placid compliance with the dull routine of life; and there is something in that appeal to which the man of these days is, I believe, ready to respond. But one thing ought to be remembered. Adventure is not the search for something new, or the ambition to create that which does not already exist. In the past, whether it be the voyage of discovery over the estranging seas or the risk of physical comfort for a peace of the spirit, always, if it ends in success, it has been the search for something, unknown indeed, yet there, a truth awaiting the courageous explorer. And so the lure of faith is the hope that by venturing forth a man shall come at the last to a reality that is beckoning out of the unknown and to a waiting land of the spirit.

That is the sceptical approach to religion and I have tried honestly to follow the sceptic to the port from

which he may set out upon the great adventure, if he be bold to sail. But further it is not my business to follow him. What he discovers in that voyage, it is not mine to say. How the intuitive sense of right and wrong is deepened and confirmed by recognition of the eternal canons of righteousness, how the vague feeling of responsibility is converted into the law of obedience, how the guiding but very fallible test of self-approval is transformed into submission to the sentences of "just-judging Jove," how the wavering purpose of conscience is caught up into the vision of cosmic teleology, what voices are heard in the silent watches of the soul, what invisible companionship comforts him, how hope grows into a great peace,—of all these things I do not presume to speak. Do you remember the words of one who recreated religion by his command "Come unto me," and who in the upper chamber on that last evening of his earthly life gave to his disciples this justification of his command: "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Those, I take it, are the sailing orders of the sceptic. And sometimes I have presumed to ask whether he who so spoke was not hinting to our heavy ears that the Incarnation, the descent of the Word into this harassed realm of mortality, was the great adventure of God, spurred by the hope, if the phrase be not blasphemous, of reaching and redeeming His creatures fallen almost into despair. So would hope answer to hope.

But I would end on a humbler note. As the last day was closing upon Socrates, talking with his friends in the gaol of Athens, he too uttered a call to the adventure of faith: "Fair is the prize, and the hope great."

APPENDIX A

PLATO's fourfold proportion is often represented in diagram somewhat as follows :

	THE PHYSICAL REALM OF OBSERVATION		THE NOETIC REALM OF INTUITION	
	A	B	C	D
Objective	Images	Natural objects and artefacta	Mathematica (forms and numbers)	Ideas
Subjective	Imagination	Opinion	Understanding	Nous (the higher reason)

This falls into a neat and pretty scheme, but in fact it represents rather Plato's mania for geometrizing than his actual theory of experience. The lowest subdivision (A) of images and imagination¹ has been tacked on to fill out the proportion, and except for the allegory of the cave, is forgotten as soon as made. What Plato has in mind to exemplify is the duality of opinion and knowledge (*nous*), of observation and intuition, with the realm of understanding (*dianoia*) and mathematica interpellated as a kind of bridge between the two. And this triple schematization, so to speak, coincides with Aristotle's report (*Meta.* 987b) : "Further, besides sensible things and

¹ I translate *eikasia* by "imagination" in order to preserve the play on the word *eikones*, "images," "shadows," "reflections." But it is rather the faculty of pure conjecture than of imagination in our sense of the word.

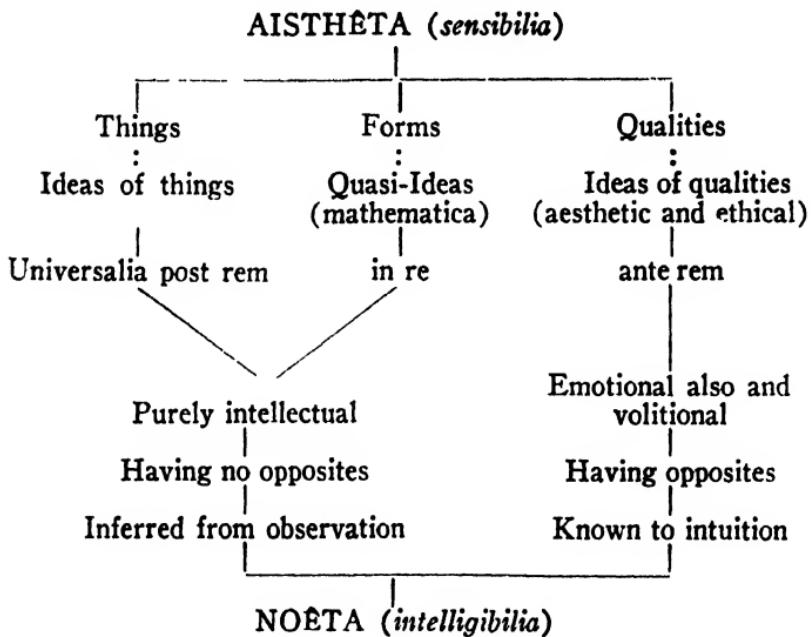
Ideas he [Plato] says there are the objects of mathematics, which occupy an intermediary position, differing from sensible things in being eternal and unchangeable, from Ideas in that they are many alike, whereas the Idea itself is in each case unique." A more significant division of the line might therefore be represented thus :

	THE PHYSICAL REALM OF OBSERVATION	THE INTERMEDIARY REALM	THE NOETIC REALM OF INTUITION
Objective	{ Natural objects and artefacta	Mathematica	Ideas
Subjective	{ Opinion	Understanding	The higher reason

This shows the order of our mental procedure, as Plato conceives it, from particular to general, but it takes no account of the fact that Plato distinguishes three varieties of the particular (things, their forms, their qualities) and three corresponding varieties of the universal. To particular things and particular qualities correspond, as has been shown, the Ideas of things (man, table, etc.) and the ethical and aesthetic Ideas (goodness, beauty, etc.). It might be asked why mathematica, corresponding to the forms of things, should not also be called Ideas. They are universals, just as are Ideas—not the attribute round or square or triangular observed in the particular object, but the circle itself or the square itself or the triangle itself with which the mathematician works. As a matter of fact Aristotle, though in the passage quoted he quite definitely places mathematica between particulars and Ideas, does elsewhere quite as definitely scold Plato for treating them as Ideas. Aristotle's incon-

sistency may perhaps be explained by supposing that at one time he is discussing Plato's personal views, while at another time he holds Plato responsible for the development of these views under the two succeeding heads of the Academy. At any rate it is certain that Plato himself in his dialogues does not refer to mathematica specifically as Ideas. It would appear, then, that to Plato these abstractions of form and number, these mathematica, were absolute universals, but quasi-Ideas rather than veritable Ideas.

If this classification be correct, then the relation of the two kinds of Ideas and the mathematica to particulars within the twofold realms of observation and intuition might be represented by a vertical extension of Plato's horizontal line somewhat as follows:



APPENDIX B

CERTAIN significant aspects, or implications, of Plato's teleological dualism, not touched on in the lecture, may be considered here. In the first place, instead of a production of something where nothing was by the bare *fiat* of an omnipotent will, creation becomes a constructive manipulation of that which is, the fashioning of a cosmos out of chaos. Now it is well known that this Greek conception of creation, based on the maxim *ex nihilo nihil fit*, was the one point of the *Timaeus* against which the early Christians argued hotly, whilst otherwise they were ready to adopt the dialogue as a confirmation of their monotheistic creed. Yet in fact the myth of Genesis is not so hostile to the Timaean allegory as the vehemence of the debate would indicate. The Biblical account opens thus :

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,
And the earth was without form and void (*tohu bohu*) . . .
and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
And God said . . .

Whereupon follows a story of creation as a progressive evocation of order out of disorder. The only substantial incompatibility of the Hebrew with the Greek view is that according to the Biblical account, as it was commonly interpreted by the Fathers and as our English version suggests, God first creates the chaos, or *tohu bohu*, upon which His Spirit works, whereas in the *Timaeus* the Demiurge is supposed to fashion the heaven and the earth out of an already

existing and recalcitrant chaos. But another and, as some competent scholars think, better rendering of the verses above quoted would give us what might be taken as a prologue to the *Timaeus*, thus: "In the beginning when God fashioned heaven and earth (now the earth was waste and void . . . and the spirit of God was brooding upon the face of the waters), then God said." And I may add that the prologue to the fourth Gospel is equally amenable to a Platonic interpretation.

Whatever the exact meaning of the Hebrew text may be, it is certain that the later interpretation, influenced in part by the metaphysical absolutism of the age following Aristotle, led to logical difficulties which, I believe, are not essential to the true genius of the Hebraic and Christian faith, and which might have been avoided had the naïve dualism of religion been fortified by the philosophical dualism of Plato. For one thing the problem of evil might never have assumed the intolerable form that plagues theology. More important is the fact that a monotheism which has allowed itself to be drugged with the monism of metaphysics must, if consistent, eschew any comprehensible notion of purpose in the divine mind and can make nothing of a cosmic teleology.

Another aspect of the Platonic dualism is that it may seem to reduce the divine Agent of creation to a power which produces measure by merely checking that which of itself has no measure and by imposing limits upon that which of itself is unlimited. Now such a conception tends to take all the colour and positive virtue out of the supernatural and to leave it nothing but a blank inhibition or pure negation; and such has

APPENDIX

been the way in which many critics, with some justification it may be, have understood my own definition of the Inner Check. I am referring particularly to a passage written a good many years ago, in which I used the negative aspect of restraint to distinguish between a true and a false type of Platonism. "There is," I said, "this certain difference between them. To the true Platonist the divine spirit, though it may be called, and is, the hidden source of beauty and order and joy, yet always, when it speaks directly in the human breast, makes itself heard as an inhibition; like the guide of Socrates, it never in its own proper voice commands to do, but only to refrain. Whereas to the pseudo-Platonist it appears as a positive inspiration, saying yes to his desires and emotions. Goethe unwittingly was giving expression to the everlasting formula of pseudo-Platonism when he put into the mouth of Mephistopheles the fateful words: 'I am the spirit that ever denies.' It is God that denies, not Satan. The moment these terms are reversed, what is reverenced as the spirit becomes a snare instead of a monitor: liberty is turned into license, a glamour of sanctity is thrown over the desires of the heart, the humility of doubt goes out of the mind, the will to follow this or that impulsion is invested with divine authority, there is an utter confusion of the higher and the lower elements of our nature."

I would not now retract these words, which seem to me faithful to the Platonic tradition, but I would modify them by an addition. The danger of fanaticism or sentimentalism from assuming we have positive knowledge where we have none must not be minimized; Christian as well as Platonic theology warns

against such a presumption. But I think that admission of the visible effect of inhibitions in beauty and order and joy should be understood more liberally in accordance with the Timaean allegory. If God works with His eye upon an Ideal pattern, then at least His knowledge has a very positive content, and His will is fixed upon a very positive goal, though their operation in this composite sphere of existence may appear to our understanding as a bare checking of excess. And for man, though he be impotent to see as God sees, yet faith in its own way is an affirmation; through all its errors and by all his negations man may keep before him the very positive goal of imitating God and of serving the divine purpose, so far as this is permitted to mortal weakness.

THE END

